

Changing Constructions of Identity: Fisher Households and Industry Restructuring

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Abstract

Fishing as an occupation provides more than a way of earning a living. Its traditions, structures and dynamics influence all aspects of the lives of individuals and households, and provide the basis for individual and collective identities. This research focuses on northeast Scotland, where communities have developed along this stretch of coast because of their relationship with the fishing industry. However, the industry is undergoing extensive restructuring, driven by fisheries management and policy responses to ecological problems in key stocks. This restructuring is bringing about major changes for the industry, and although the policies driving reform recognise there are socio-cultural implications, understandings of these impacts are underdeveloped.

This research draws on theories of identity to conceptualise the socio-cultural foundations of the fishing industry. In-depth interviews with fishermen, former fishermen and their wives provide a rich source of data to explore the construction and performance of identity. This research demonstrates how three domains of fishing, the sea, household and community, are central spaces for fishing identity. In these spaces traditional symbols of fishing are used to create and maintain a shared understanding of the industry and collective identity. The changes brought about by the restructuring of the industry present challenges to these traditional constructions of identity and are undermining key symbols, such as maintaining a close-knit crew. The past is used as a resource to understand these present challenges, and in many cases positive fishing identities are being maintained. However there is a sense that fishing no longer occupies its central position within northeast Scotland; instead it has become a community within a community.

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1 Introduction

Fishing as an occupation provides more than a way of earning a living (Pettersen, 1996). Its traditions, structures and dynamics influence all aspects of the lives of individuals and households. This research explores the way in which these socio-cultural dimensions of the fishing industry provide the resources for the construction and performance of identity. The empirical context of this research is northeast Scotland, an area that has been shaped by its relationship with the industry. This area is significant in terms of the UK and Scottish fishing industry (see Figure 1.1 for location of study area). In 2005 northeast Scotland accounted for 11% of the UK's and 30% of Scotland's fisheries employment. In the same year 52% of the Scottish catch by volume and 50% by value were landed into the northeast ports (Aberdeenshire Council, 2007). The economic importance of fishing to the region is high (see Figure 1.2 for map of study area). For example, it is estimated that in 1999, 29% of Fraserburgh's employment came from fisheries, aquaculture and processing (Scottish Executive, 2002). Once the multipliers for ancillary services and the induced employment from the household spend of those employed in fishing were taken into account, 57% of Fraserburgh's employment was considered dependent on the industry (Scottish Executive, 2002). However, and as is central to this research, dependence on fisheries provides not only economic resources, but social and cultural resources that can remain long after any loss of direct economic dependence (Brookfield *et al*, 2005; Jacob *et al*, 2001; Nuttall, 2000).

The fishing industry is experiencing a period of major restructuring, driven by an over-capacity in the fleet (Royal Society of Edinburgh, 2004) and reflecting global problems in key commercial stocks (Symes, 2001). Through the European Common Fisheries Policy, restructuring has attempted to match the capacity of the European fleet with the health of the commercial fish stocks (European Commission, 2004). The demersal fleet which mainly targets whitefish species that live on or near the seabed, such as cod, haddock and monkfish, has been hardest hit by restructuring due to the precarious health

of the cod stocks. The demersal sector is the focus of this research. For this sector, allocated quota in key species have been reduced by as much as 84% between 1997 and 2007 and vessels have been restricted to as little as 15 days at sea per month (Aberdeenshire Council, 2007). Decommissioning schemes removed 165 vessels from the Scottish demersal fleet between 2001 and 2004 (Scottish Executive, 2006).

The impacts of this restructuring have repercussions for the individuals and households who depend on the fishing industry for their economic and socio-cultural resources. The socio-cultural dimensions of the industry have not traditionally been addressed by fisheries policy (Symes, 2000a), but instead have been seen as an add-on (ESSFiN, 1999). More recent policy developments have recognised the importance of taking these socio-cultural dimensions into account (Royal Society of Edinburgh, 2004). However, there is a lack of clarity over what these might be, how they can be assessed and what they might mean for fisheries management.

Figure 1.1

Map of the
UK
showing
location of
study area

Source:
Ordnance
Survey,



Figure 1.2 Map of study area. Source: Ordnance Survey, 2001.



The study of fisheries has traditionally been dominated by the biological and economic sciences and whilst the social science of fisheries is a growing field, it has not achieved the same influence over policy as bio-economic research (ESSFiN, 1999). However, important contributions to the understanding of the socio-cultural dimensions of fishing and its relationship to restructuring have been made particularly in Newfoundland and Norway (see for example Power, 2005; Binkley, 2002; Women's Studies International Forum, 2000). Social science research on fisheries in the UK has instead focussed on policies and management (see for example Brookfield *et al*, 2005; Daw and Gray, 2005; Stead, 2005; Symes, 2005, 2001; Phillipson, 2002). Nadel-Klein is a key exception who, through sustained ethnographic research, has focussed on understanding Scottish fisheries from the perspective of individuals and households who work within it (2003; 2000; 1988). However holistic, qualitative research that explores the interaction between the socio-cultural dimensions of fishing and its relationship with the current period of restructuring from the perspectives of those living through it presents a significant gap within the literature.

This research uses the concept of identity to encapsulate the socio-cultural dimensions of the fishing industry. Using a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews with fishermen¹, former fishermen and their wives provide a rich source of materials to explore the construction and performance of fishing identities and the interaction with the restructuring of the industry.

This research developed from a combination of professional and personal factors. Academically, coming from a background in human geography and studying for a Masters in rural development, I was introduced to work from rural sociology that addresses gender and identity in rural and agricultural spaces, particularly within the context of agricultural restructuring (see for example Brandth, 2002; Shortall, 2002; Ni Laoire, 2001). Personally, with family connections in northeast Scotland I was spending time getting to know

¹ Throughout this research I use the term fishermen, rather than the gender-neutral term fishers. This reflects the way in which those working in and living alongside the industry refer to themselves and the highly gendered nature of fishing.

the area. The 'crisis' in the fishing industry was often in the local media, especially at Christmas when the next year's quota would be announced. Returning to university and identifying the gap in the literature described above, the potential for a research project became clear. With my personal connections to the area, the ethnographic approach needed to explore the socio-cultural dimensions of fishing was feasible. Funding from the Economic and Social Research Council through the 1+3 scheme enabled an exploratory research project, my Masters thesis (Williams, 2003), before moving on to this research.

Whilst beginning the analysis through exploring the growing mass of interview transcripts and fieldnotes, a framework for analysis began to emerge. The participants in this research spoke about their lives in relation to three areas - the work of fishing, their home lives and the socio-cultural dimensions of the places where they live. This was perhaps in part led by the questions I asked, which were informed by readings of the existing literature on fishing, and the directions I intended to take this research. However, the interviews were conducted in an unstructured way with participants free to discuss anything they felt relevant, and these three areas of discussion featured throughout.

I have developed these three themes as an analytical framework to assist in the methodical analysis and presentation of the vast array of materials generated through fieldwork, and as a way of conceptualising the operation of identity within the wider context of fishing. Each of these themes, or what I have termed domains, encapsulates a particular space where fishing identities are constructed and performed. The sea focuses on the work worlds of fishermen as they actively perform the work of fishing. This is in some ways a private world, not often seen or understood by those outside the industry, but also a public world, where fishermen interact most directly with the policy and management of the fisheries. The household encapsulates the work carried out on shore that enables fishermen to go to sea, to which women are central. This is the private world of fishing families, but is greatly impacted upon by the dynamics of the work of fishing. Finally the community is the third domain of fishing. This is the public world of fishing where fishing is most visible to those

outside the industry. All three domains refer to physical spaces. These spaces are given meaning through the performance of fishing identities and in turn, claims of belonging to these spaces are used in the construction of fishing identities. These three domains have been used in structuring the analysis of materials and the presentation of the thesis, with each domain treated individually within the three main data chapters.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2, 'Conceptualising identity and the domains of fishing', sets out the ways in which the concept of identity is used in this research exploring the negotiation and performance of identity, individual and collective identities and the relationship between identity and place. The chapter moves on to illustrate the three domains of fishing introduced above and the potential impacts of restructuring, drawing in literature from the social science of fisheries and other primary industries.

Chapter 3, 'Industry, region and policy', describes the fishing industry and its structure, focussing on the economic importance of fishing to the UK, Scotland and northeast Scotland. The chapter illustrates how the fishing industry is managed through the Common Fisheries Policy and what the restructuring of the industry has meant for the functioning of the demersal fleet in northeast Scotland. The chapter moves on to explore how social considerations have been approached by fisheries policy, concluding with an overview of the contribution of the social sciences to understandings of the socio-cultural dimensions of fishing.

Chapter 4 presents the methodological approach and practical methods used to generate and analyse the materials that form the empirical basis for this research. The approaches to fieldwork and in-depth interviewing are described, alongside consideration of the idiosyncratic challenges of researching fishing households. The chapter concludes by discussing the

analysis of materials through coding supported by the software Atlas.ti and the production of this thesis.

Chapter 5 marks the beginning of the second part of the thesis, which focuses on the lives and worlds of the participants in this research. This chapter, 'Setting the scene', serves as an introduction to the people and places from northeast Scotland who took part. Following individual introductions to the households, an overview of the characteristics of the sample is presented. The chapter concludes by returning to the three domains of fishing to set up the following three chapters which explore each domain in turn.

Chapter 6 explores the way in which fishing identities are constructed and performed in the work worlds of fishermen, out at sea. The chapter begins with a vignette from one household where a fisherman and his wife narrate an 'average' fishing trip, illustrating what 'being a fisherman' involves. The chapter moves on to explore the changes that have occurred within the industry and how this has impacted upon the work worlds of fishermen, and so their constructions of identity. This is themed around increasing regulation, difficulties in maintaining a steady crew and impacts on fishermen of leaving the industry.

Chapter 7 deals with the private world of fishing, the household. As with the previous chapter, a vignette from one fishing household is presented to illustrate the nature of fishing households, and how women in particular construct parts of their identities in the work they contribute which enables their husband to go to sea. The chapter moves on to consider the impacts of change in the industry that have repercussions for the household and the construction and performance of identity in this domain. This centres on stress and pressure, and the impacts on the household of fishermen leaving the industry.

Chapter 8, the final data chapter, explores the public world of fishing and the ways in which participants in this research use the idea of 'fishing communities' in the construction and performance of identity. The chapter

focuses on the shared understandings of research participants of what makes a 'fishing community', including an active fishing harbour, a local economy driven and supported by the fishing industry, and social structures and events with fishing and fishermen at the centre. The changes in the industry and broader society that have impacted upon these symbols of 'fishing communities' are discussed, along with the implications for the construction and performance of fishing identities.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis, bringing together the key themes from this research, discussing the implications of these findings and suggesting further avenues for research into the socio-cultural dimensions of the fishing industry.

The following chapter introduces the concept of identity and the way it is used in this research, before drawing in existing literature on the fishing industry to frame the three dimensions of fishing and the potential impacts of restructuring.

2 Conceptualising identity and the domains of fishing

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2.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the (re)negotiation of identities in the context of the restructuring of the fishing industry in northeast Scotland. The following chapter illustrates how socio-cultural issues are beginning to be considered by fisheries policy, but that there is a lack of clarity over just what these issues might be, what they should mean for fisheries management and how they can be conceptualised. In this research I utilise the concept of identity to understand these socio-cultural aspects of the industry. This chapter sets out the ways in which the concept is used in this research. Drawing on some of the key ideas from the raft of literature on the subject, I argue for a conceptualisation of identity as relational, interpretive, negotiated and performed. The centrality of place to this understanding of identity is discussed, before setting out the three key domains of fishing that are used to structure the analysis of the data on which this thesis is based, drawing in the existing literature on fishing and other industries.

2.2 Introduction to identity

Defined simply, identity is about “who we are and how we differ from those around us, both near and far” (Jackson, 2005: 391). Our identities are based on what makes us similar or different from others, and so the concept can be used to encapsulate and define the social aspects of fishing that distinguishes it from other industries. Much of the individual identities expressed by the participants in this research draw on shared cultural identities that they hold, at least on the surface, in common with each other. These cultural identities perform important functions. They provide a sense of belonging, of having a place within the world. Having this understanding of yourself provides the cultural resources or maps to be able to place others and understand the world around you (Jenkins, 1996). Maintaining a shared sense of identity ensures that the distinctiveness on which this identity is based, and the place in the world it provides, is not lost (Cohen, 1985).

Identity has been the subject of much academic study, reflecting the importance of the concept in the social sciences. Much of the attention paid to identity within poststructuralist and feminist research has focussed on gender identities. This body of research moved away from an understanding of individuals as having an inherent, stable identity, to understanding identities as multiple and socially constructed. These ideas have been developed in several disciplines most notably in cultural anthropology, human geography and sociology. This research draws on a range of ideas from these fields to explore identities within the context of restructuring of the fishing industry in northeast Scotland.

2.3 The negotiation and performance of identity

The identities explored in this research are both individual and collective (the relationship between these is dealt with in the next section). The essential point about identity is that it is about sameness and difference. Identities are not inherent within a person or group but relational, based on processes of

identifying these similarities and differences in relation to others (Jackson, 2005; Hall, 1996). Because they are not fixed within a person or group they are the outcome of active processes of negotiation, of identifying and placing others within the world as we understand it (Jenkins, 1996). So whilst identities can be described as individual and/or collective, all are inherently social as they are based on interaction with others (Jenkins, 1996).

Because identities are not fixed but based on social interaction, they are dependent on meaning, interpretation and (mis)understanding (Hall, 1996). Jenkins (2000; 1996) describes this as based on a two-way process of internal and external identification, or what Nadel-Klein terms “self-reference” and “ascription” (2003: 94). Internal identification refers to how we identify ourselves, and external identification to how others identify us. Just as one individual or group is working to identify themselves, they are constantly being identified by other individuals or groups around them. Jenkins (2000) describes how internal and external identification can interact in three key ways. Firstly, that self identification and identification by others are interdependent. Defining what we are entails defining what others are that we are not, or the creation of boundaries as discussed below. Secondly, that the ascription of identity by others affects our definitions of ourselves, in part as it determines their behaviour towards us. And thirdly, our definitions of ourselves can be used as a defensive resource against classification by others; we can fight against external identification that we do not agree with, which strengthens our own self-identification. Because identities are dependent on this interaction between self and other identification, an identity is not completely successful unless it is understood in the way intended by the performer, or the performer is content with how she has been identified by others. Identities are the outcome of these negotiations between internal and external identifications (Jenkins, 2000; 1996).

These negotiations of identity can be understood as performances. Goffman (1969), drawing on the earlier works of Mead (1934), described the performance of identity using metaphors from drama, suggesting that individuals acted out identities depending on the demands of a situation and

the audience who interprets this performance. Other authors have drawn on the work of Butler (1990) to explore performativity, the way in which performances draw on and are constrained by discourses and power, making the performer less free than Goffman describes (Gregson and Rose, 2000). This strand of work usefully argues that identities do not exist before they are performed, and only come into being through performance. As identities are brought into being through performance and interpretation they can be understood as becoming, “a process never completed”, as there is always the potential for further interpretation (Hall, 1996: 2). And so as identities are contingent on interpretation and never completely achieved they must be worked at, or performed, to be maintained (Jenkins, 1996).

2.4 Individual and collective identities

Identities can therefore be understood as relational, interpretive, negotiated and performed. This section deals with the dynamics between individual and collective identities, and how people can simultaneously maintain both individual and collective identities. Cohen argues that this is made possible through the use of symbols. Although Cohen himself struggles to define symbols, he suggests that to think of them as “things that stand for other things” (1987: 11) is a way to begin to understand them and later describes them as “the ideas behind the words” (1987: 94). This ephemeral nature of symbols is what makes them useful in identity work, the construction and negotiation of identity through performance. Symbols do more than refer to something, be that an object or an idea, but allow the creation of meaning around them: “Symbols do not so much express meaning as give us the capacity to make meaning” (Cohen, 1985: 15). In identity work this allows individuals within a group to refer to and value symbols of the same form, whilst understanding the symbols in a way that is meaningful to the individual. In this way the group is able to present a seemingly coherent identity without compromising the many varieties of its individual members. During the fieldwork for this research, it became clear that fishing boats were used as symbols of fishing identity. They were more than just boats and were imbued

with a wide variety of meanings of what it means to have a fishing identity, such as being part of a tight-knit crew, the work of the household enabling the boat to go to sea and the central role of the boat in the economic and social lives of fishing villages.

Individual and collective identities are defined through the creation of boundaries. The active process of identification involves defining yourself by what you are not, what Hall terms “frontier effects” (1996: 3) and Cohen describes as “the view across the boundary” (1986: 11). These boundaries mark the points of difference between groups. However boundaries are not concrete things but symbolic, and “exist in the mind of the beholders” (Cohen, 1985: 12). According to Cohen (1985), individuals within the group relate to the boundary in two distinct ways. Firstly the boundary expresses the group identity to outsiders in a simplistic form, a ‘public face’ or stereotype. This snapshot of group identity is then refracted through an individual's experiences to make it meaningful to the individual. Because of their symbolic nature and the potential for misinterpretation, boundaries must be maintained and worked at to continue to mark points of difference, of identity.

The idea of community can be understood as a boundary expressing symbol (Cohen, 1985). As with identity, the study of community has produced a massive literature. What is most useful here, reflecting the way participants in this research spoke about community, is how ideas of community are strategically used during times of change. Cohen (1985) understands community by exploring what he sees as its two interrelated uses: to express that members of a group have something in common, and that this marks them as different from others. It is therefore a tool, a symbol, strategically used to express similarity and difference and mark the boundary between groups:

“People construct community symbolically, making it a resource and repository of meaning, and a referent of their identity.”

(Cohen, 1985: 118)

The idea of community is used particularly when that which marks a collective identity as distinctive, the boundaries, are under threat (Cohen, 1985). Dalby and Mackenzie (1997) also understand identities as a process of becoming, and that opposition to threats is an important part in the process of constructing collective identities based on the idea of community. They suggest that the idea of community does not necessarily exist in a particular form until it is threatened, "that in important ways they are formed and shaped by the opposition to [that which] is portrayed as threatening" (Dalby and Mackenzie, 1997: 101).

The past plays an important role in the construction of collective identities, particularly in the use of community to defend boundaries against change. References to the past and the telling of stories surrounding characters, places and incidents from times gone by are commonplace when reflecting on new circumstances and challenges:

"We thus encounter the paradox that, although the reassertion of community is made necessary by contemporary circumstances, it is often accomplished through precisely those idioms which these circumstances threaten with redundancy."

(Cohen, 1985: 99).

However, the use of the past is not due to a group's inability to face up to the present or future, of being unable to remove themselves from the past. Instead it is a strategic use of the past as a resource to make sense of and confront the present and future (Power, 2005; Dalby and Mackenzie, 1997; Hall, 1996; Cohen, 1985). It is used to help make the unfamiliar familiar, past experiences are drawn into the present to enable some sense to be made of it. Cohen argues that social interaction, whether individually or collectively, is guided by cultural or cognitive maps which provide direction on what situations may mean and how to behave. That an individual's cognitive maps often refer to the past is unsurprising as they are "part of their cultural store,

accumulated over generations and, thus, heavily scented by the past” (Cohen, 1985: 101).

A shared past provides a sense of embeddedness and collective history, a sense of belonging and having a place within the world. Edwards suggests that this shared past is a connection to what makes a group distinctive, and so maintaining the past, through remembering and talking about it, is a tool for securing a future: “To lose the past would be to lose a present identity which could not, in turn, be projected ahead” (1998: 163). The past is a particularly effective resource as it is without concrete meaning, “wonderfully malleable” (Cohen, 1985: 101), and so can be used strategically depending on circumstances (Bird, 2002). The past can be “selectively mined” to (re)construct the boundaries that are threatened (Dalby and Mackenzie, 1997: 102). Shared narratives of place are important in signifying belonging to that place (Bird, 2002). The relationship between place and identity is discussed below.

2.5 Place and identity

This research explores the negotiation of identity within the context of the restructuring of the fishing industry in northeast Scotland. The research and its participants are very much embedded in the places along this stretch of coast. Place is an important concept in the construction of individual and collective identities. Similarly to identity, place has been the subject of much research (see for example Cresswell, 2004; Holloway and Hubbard, 2001; Massey and Jess, 1995; Hough, 1990) but is used here in two key ways. Firstly place is created and given meaning through the performance of identities, and secondly place, and belonging to a place, is used in the construction of identities.

Places are not benign objects, but are associated with particular meanings (Cresswell, 2004; Massey, 1995). The meanings of place are constructed by the people claiming association with that place through the performance of

their identities (Gregson and Rose, 2000). As with identities, the symbolic nature of place is dependent on interpretation and so:

“Places are never finished but produced through the reiteration of practices - the repetition of seemingly mundane activities on a daily basis.”

(Cresswell, 2004: 82).

With the potential for further interpretation of place, places only retain their meaning through the continual expression of that meaning. The use of the past and the telling of shared stories to create collective identities are also used in the construction of place. The anecdotes and folklore recited by people creates a specific version of place imbued with carefully chosen meaning (Bird, 2002). The places in this research become and remain ‘fishing communities’ through the performance of fishing identities, including through narrative.

Not only is place created through the performance of identity, it is also used in the construction of identities:

“In defining the discourses of inclusion and exclusion that constitute identity, people call upon an affinity with place or, at least, with representations of places, which in turn, are used to legitimate their claim to those places.”

(Ashworth and Graham, 2005: 3).

An affinity with place is used to mark belonging. A long term-relationship with a place often engenders a sense of feeling ‘at home’, of belonging, which forms part of identity (Convery and Dutson, 2006). Having the local cultural knowledge to tell stories about this place signifies belonging to it (Bird, 2002).

In summary, identities are conceptualised here as relational, constructed through the active identification of similarities and difference. The maintenance of individual and collective identities is made possible through

the use of symbols, which share form but allow individual meaning. The construction of these identities involves the creation of boundaries, which are maintained through the performance of identity. The idea of community and shared understandings of the past are key symbols used to maintain boundaries. The participants in this research created and utilised ideas of place to construct their identities and signify their sense of belonging to these places. The places they spoke about had a physical geographical expression and formed a useful structure for analysing and presenting the data generated to explore their negotiations of identity. The following section provides more detail on the three domains of fishing, as introduced in Chapter 1, by drawing on the existing fisheries literature from the social sciences.

2.6 The domains of fishing

The performance and negotiation of fishing identities is based within and creates three particular domains. Firstly, the work world of fishing, the sea, is given specific meaning through the performance of, and is used in the construction of, occupational identities. The second domain, the household, is where women's work in particular is used to enable fishermen to go to sea which forms an important part of their identity. Finally, the community is the domain constructed through the performance of fishing identities and used in the construction of collective identities. This framework is used to present the data that forms the second part of this thesis, and is used here to bring together the key literature that frames this research. As is discussed in the following chapter, much of the research on the socio-cultural dimensions of fishing has come from Norway and Newfoundland. This literature is combined with that available from Scotland and with work on other industries such as mining and agriculture where relevant.

2.6.1 The sea

The work of being a fisherman is associated with particular occupational identities, which, with the gendered nature of the fishing industry, are also intrinsically linked with constructions of masculinities (Marshall, 2001; Yodanis, 2000). The harsh living and working conditions of being at sea requires strong hard-working men, whose knowledge of the local fisheries is highly valued (van Ginkel 2001; Nuttall 2000). Self-sufficiency and resourcefulness are essential skills to succeed at sea (Power, 2005). Traditionally, fishermen are proud of and derive high levels of job satisfaction from their work, which is associated with high levels of freedom (van Ginkel, 1999a).

Being a fisherman involves working in dangerous conditions and overcoming challenges (Waite and Hartig, 2005). Similarly in the mining industry, work in the pits was incredibly arduous and often dangerous, with self respect and status gained through strength, endurance and skills underground (Pattison, 1999). The work of fishing is physical and often dirty or physically unpleasant (Waite and Hartig, 2005). It is typically learnt through a combination of formal learning and apprenticeship, with local knowledge accumulated through experience and working with established fishermen (van Ginkel, 1999b). Alongside the physical and technical skills of fishing, fishermen are employing increasing amounts of complex information technology onboard their fishing vessels, and so must also be competent in this (Power, 2005).

Fishing enterprises are traditionally passed from father to son, with crew made up of male members of the family and close friends or neighbours (Symes and Frangoudes, 2001). Social relationships exist between skippers and crew based on team work and the leadership of the skipper (van Ginkel, 1999b; Knutson, 1991). The relationships between skippers are complex, combining the desire for the local fleet to succeed and the need to work together in times of emergency with elements of competition between individuals (Palmer, 1990). Similar networks of co-operation exist in the mining industry where men work in close relationships with their co-workers,

relying on each other for their own safety, and these relationships extended out into the social life of the community (Pattison, 1999). The success of individuals is often the subject of public conversation and debate (van Ginkel, 1999a).

2.6.2 The household

Fishing households are central to the fishery, and women are central to fishing households. Fisheries have traditionally been constructed as male domains, with women's contributions and roles ignored (Davis and Nadel-Klein, 1997). Beginning with Nadel-Klein and Davis' (1988) 'To Work and To Weep: Women in Fishing Economies', a body of literature has developed focussing on exploring fishing through the lens of gender and documenting the work of women (see for example Women's Studies Forum International, 2000). Although this work has grown in quantity and focus, dealing specifically with socio-cultural impacts of fisheries restructuring, it still remains on the margins of fisheries research (Binkley, 2002). This marginalisation of women and their work reflects the construction of the fisheries in broader society. For example the media in Scotland has defined fishing and fishing communities by men and their economic activity:

"women are rarely mentioned, except when widowed by the sea and campaigning for the return of their husband's body to the community. Women's lives as mothers, housewives or indeed fish workers are otherwise invisible"

(Munro, 2000: 9).

As highlighted in the previous section, there is a highly gendered division of labour within fishing, whereby men go to sea to fish and women do not, although there are of course some exceptions to this. Women do however make significant contributions to the fishing industry in many other respects (Davis and Nadel-Klein, 1988). Davis (1988) breaks women's roles within

fishing communities down into two categories: 'instrumental' work, their tangible contribution to production, and 'expressive' work which focuses on the more symbolic, emotional aspects of women's work. This categorisation is slightly problematic as it places the work women do to run the household as 'symbolic', however it highlights a useful distinction between direct contributions to the production process (whether this is paid or unpaid work) and more indirect contributions without which fishing households and communities could not function.

In terms of 'instrumental' work, although women do not generally go to sea to fish, they have always and continue to play an important role in preparations for fishing trips and the processing of the catch onshore. For example, throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the household fishing enterprise in northern Scotland was dependent on the work of women in baiting lines, mending nets, helping to launch the boat, processing and selling the catch (Nadel-Klein, 2003; 2000). These women were notoriously strong and hardworking, and fishermen and their wives depended on each other for the maintenance of the household enterprise and income as illustrated in a local saying "a fisher laddie needs a fisher lassie" (Nadel-Klein, 2003: 66). As the migratory herring fishery developed in the UK, women took on new paid roles in processing where they were directly employed by a processor to gut and prepare the fish as it was landed (Nadel-Klein, 2003, 2000; Thompson, 1985). This involved an army of women, 'gutting quines', travelling around the UK following the herring and the fleet catching them from Shetland down to the Norfolk coast. Although the majority of this work, both in preparing nets and processing the catch had died out by the 1950s, women, although not necessarily wives of fishermen, still form a large percentage of the processing labour force in the modern Scottish fishery (Nadel-Klein, 2003; Thompson, 1985).

Many of the traditional tasks relating to the fishing enterprise have died out as the fishery became more industrialised and technology developed. Women's identities are increasingly constructed on the basis of not doing work directly related to the catching of fish (Yodanis, 2000). However, women still carry out

'instrumental' tasks which enable fishermen to go to sea. These tasks can include maintaining communication between the boat and shore, making sure equipment and stores are ready for when the boat comes in, notifying fish buyers of when the boat is due in and what they have caught, and phoning round other crew's wives to let them know the movements of the boat. These are usually unpaid and often unrecognised tasks, but essential to keep the fishing operation running. Women who perform these tasks have been described as the 'ground crew', 'shore crew' or 'shore captains' (Gerrard, 2005; James, 1994 in Yodanis, 2000; Jentoft, 1993).

Davis' second theme of women's work in the household is 'expressive' work (1988). With their husband away at sea for long periods of time, women are largely responsible for the management of the fishing household and bringing up children (Jentoft, 1993). This requires high levels of skill in managing a fluctuating income because of the nature of the industry. The ability to run the household efficiently and focus on caring for children and their husband when he is home is central to being a fisherman's wife, and often prioritised over any paid employment outside the home (Yodanis, 2000). This is similar to the responsibilities and constructions of women in other industries, such as mining (Carr, 2001; Warwick and Littlejohn, 1992) and agriculture (Little, 2002). However, the independence required for running the household while the fisherman is at sea must be renegotiated when he returns (Binkley, 2002), as is true for other industries where men work away for long periods of time, such as merchant shipping (Thomas and Bailey, 2006) and offshore oil work (Parkes *et al*, 2005).

Women play an important role in the socialisation of the next generation of fishers into their future occupation, with the family enterprise often passed from father to son and crews made up of brothers and brothers-in-law (Symes and Frangoudes, 2001). As well as being central to the reproduction of the fishing household, they can also discourage sons from entering the industry (Pettersen, 2000; Yodanis, 2000). Many women learn how to run a fishing household through their own upbringing and often pass these skills on to their daughters (Gerrard, 1995). With fishermen away at sea for long periods of

time, women are not only responsible for the day-to-day child rearing, but also for mediating and maintaining the relationship between the fisherman and his children (Munro, 2000). It has also been suggested that women in fishing households manage the emotional bonds within the family and perform through worry (Davis, 1988). This must be at an appropriate level that demonstrates concern for their husband, but allows them to continue with their day-to-day work (Clark, 1988; Davis, 1988).

2.6.3 The community

The historical development of Scottish fishing villages was often based on inshore small-boat fishing combined with small-scale agriculture (Nadel-Klein, 1988). The fishers lived in close-knit communities, often in 'fishertowns' or 'seatons' located apart from the rest of the village close to the shore, stigmatised by their occupation (Nadel-Klein 2000; Nuttall 2000). Social activity was concentrated around the harbour and boat sheds for men, and in the kitchens of friends and family for women. The cultural identity of the individual and community was, and in some places still is, closely tied to the relationship with the sea, whereby "fishing is more of a preoccupation than an occupation" (Seafish, in Haugh and Pardy, 2000: 185).

Similarly to fishing, many mining communities in the coalfields grew as 'planned worker settlements' in locations that served the pits well, but perhaps would not have otherwise grown due to their physical isolation (Pattison, 1999). Pit villages were often viewed negatively from the outside, but had a sense of internal pride in their strong communities (Warwick and Littlejohn, 1992). The whole life of the community revolved around the rhythms of the pit (Dicks *et al*, 1993), and the internal logic of the community was based around a highly valued and localised set of traditions (Pattison, 1999; Warwick and Littlejohn, 1992).

In fishing communities, social events such as birthday parties are used as opportunities for fishermen to gather together, and are often a time when

information is shared (van Ginkel, 1999b). In parts of some fishing communities, religion is an important way of dealing with the uncertainty of the industry and as an important hub in social networks (Clark, 1988). In others the pub is more important (Peace, 1992). These events and social gatherings would also be opportunities to discuss and compare the relative success of individual fishermen and crews (Binkley, 2002).

More recently in Scotland, broad social movements and in- and out-migration are altering the make-up of these fishing communities to the point where some villages have become commuter towns for Aberdeen, holiday villages or even abandoned where the harbour is inadequate for fishing and the village too remote to succeed (Nuttall, 2000). Yet with all this change, many of the villages even if they are not directly dependent on the fisheries economically, are dependent upon it for their cultural identity. Representations of fishing in the tourism and heritage industry are becoming more commonplace, though not always welcome, in Scottish fishing communities (Nadel-Klein, 2003).

2.6.4 The impacts of restructuring

To some extent, economic dependence on the fisheries is always a vulnerable and precarious position for households to be in. Not only are incomes dependent on the natural fluctuations in ecosystems and weather, but also the variability in prices achieved at market. It is only once the catch is sold and expenses deducted that the income from a trip can be calculated (Clark, 1988). 'Crisis' is a term that is open to interpretation, it is: "culturally and historically constituted and locally instantiated and experienced" (Nadel-Klein, 2000: 364). According to Nadel-Klein's (2000) analysis of Scottish fishing communities, fishers here perceive themselves to have been in times of perpetual crisis for the last 200 years, due to for example their exploitative relationships with curer-merchants, disaster at sea, empty nets, and poor prices. Additionally these problems have been intensified by the stigma attached to being fisherfolk and their perceived alienation from mainstream politics. These times of crisis are often interspersed with times of relative

wealth (Nadel-Klein, 2000), making the management and planning of household spending increasingly difficult due to the erratic nature of the income. In other fishing dependent areas, the threat of fish processing plant closure, dramatic increases in costs of fuel or insurance, or changes to government regulations have produced times of great uncertainty and the sense of 'crisis' (Clark, 1988; Neis, 1988).

However, the crisis and restructuring that has been sweeping round the fishing dependent regions of the North Atlantic over the past 10-15 years is quantitatively and qualitatively different to that which fisherfolk have experienced in the past. This current period:

“...poses a threat not just to the livelihood of each individual fisher and fisher household, but to the collective way of life and self-regard of an entire [region].”

(Nadel-Klein, 2000: 366).

This section brings together research on crisis and restructuring from fisheries and other industries to illustrate the potential impacts of these processes, and the need to consider the current issues facing fishing households in northeast Scotland.

As discussed above, the construction of masculinity in fishing communities is traditionally tied to the spaces of the sea, boats and harbour, with femininity based around the home. During times of restructuring on Newfoundland, with some men no longer able to go to sea, they spent more time on shore, either in the stages that were re-equipped to accommodate men at leisure, in local bars which became hide-outs for unemployed men, or around the home (Davis, 2000). Spending more time at home compromises the traditional masculinity, and is a constant reminder of the precarious situation the fishermen are in (Power, 2005). Power (2005) tests the theory that a crisis of fishing leads to a crisis of masculinity in fishing communities because the latter is built almost exclusively on the former. However, she finds that both men and women work to reproduce existing masculinities (and associated

femininities) in times of crisis. In their study of redundant steelworkers, MacKenzie *et al* (2006) also suggest that maintaining traditional identities is important during times of restructuring and crisis. Drawing on past identities can be seen as a way of dealing with the current challenges (Parry, 2003).

Although crisis and restructuring affects whole communities, the impacts have been experienced in a gendered way, and despite both men and women being affected, the focus of restructuring policies has tended to ignore the impacts on women and the broader household (Davis and Nadel-Klein, 1997). Women have been impacted upon not just where they were officially employed in fish processing. Their roles as 'shore captain' and manager of the household are being encroached upon by their men spending more time at home, or increased if the household strategy involves fishing more intensively. Economic and social insecurity has intensified, and the future for their families and communities has become increasingly uncertain. Women's shared roles as 'worriers' for their husbands away at sea has become a private individual worry for household survival (Davis, 2000). The financial worries have intensified the existing competing demands on the budget of the family fishing enterprise and generic household expenditure, and the need to plan the spending of the much-reduced household income has become more urgent (Binkley, 2000). In fishing, mining and farming households, these tensions are added to the renegotiation of breadwinner roles, as some wives take on greater paid work, and men suffer a loss of self-esteem and increased anxiety through their loss of earnings or work (Bennett, 2004; Ni Laoire, 2001; Binkley, 2000). With fishermen either leaving the industry or unable to fish at previous levels, they spend more time in the home. This presents a potential challenge to women's power and responsibility in running the household (Marshall, 2001). In order to try to maintain fishermen's traditional masculinity, and so their femininity, some women invest time and effort in trying to find their husbands tasks to do outside the home (Power, 2005).

The strategic response of households to crisis depends on the economic, social and cultural resources they have to hand. Pettersen (1996) identifies a common issue for all households: the experience of living in economic

uncertainty and increased concern for the future. Her work aims to analyse the policy responses to the crisis, in the light of notions of sustainable development that incorporate aims of increasing people's control over their own lives and is sensitive to local cultures and values. Through her exploration of the strategies Norwegian fishing households employed to negotiate these policies, she finds that the policies cannot be described as sustainable as they have left people feeling "bullied" by fisheries management systems that take little account of the whole household and community (Pettersen, 1996: 245).

Attempts at restructuring of these economies and communities are mediated by the social structures already in place (Davis 2000; Nuttall 2000; Morgan 1993). The effectiveness of any policy is dependent on its take-up by those it is intended to act upon. Woodrow (1998) and Sinclair *et al* (1999) examine the adjustment programs put in place on Newfoundland's Bonavista peninsula, finding them ineffective in achieving their aims of reducing the number of fishers, in part because they failed to take account of the socio-cultural fabric of the region. Sinclair *et al* (1999) found that many people, both fishers and non-fishers, were considering leaving the area but were concerned that, in view of their existing skills, finding employment would be any easier elsewhere, and that they greatly valued the social aspects of 'community' where they lived. Among those who had decided to stay, many people were combining social security and adjustment payments with work in the informal economy to enable them to stay in the area. Woodrow (1998) found that the adjustment programs did not take into account the way in which the fisheries are central to these communities, and the strong levels of commitment fishers have to their work and associated way of life. Overall, only 15% of eligible fishers chose to retrain or retire, and most complied with the program but only chose the options that allowed them to stay in the industry (Woodrow, 1998: 117). In Nova Scotia, many fishers were reluctant to take part in readjustment schemes that entailed the permanent surrender of fishing licences, as they intended to return to the fisheries when (or if) they 'bounce back' (Binkley, 2000).

One issue that resonates around all areas affected by crisis, is the sense of “collective depression” (Jentoft, 1993: 10) created by the sudden collapse of livelihoods and associated cultural resources. Despair and loss of hope spread within not only those dependent on the fishery, but also to those living in fishing communities but working in other sectors (Davis, 2000; Jentoft, 1993). Alongside this, the “painful readjustment policies” applied to areas such as Newfoundland that have attempted to ‘encourage’ people to leave the industry and localities on which their identities are based, have left them feeling that they live in “redundant communities” (Davis and Gerrard, 2000: 280). Although by no means static before the crisis, these communities had a sense of stability or ‘embeddedness’ in relation to the fisheries, that left them ‘disembedded’ when the fishing was changed greatly or removed (Sinclair *et al*, 1999). The position of fishers and their families within communities has changed, with those employed in more stable jobs such as education and health replacing them as the elite in terms of standard of living and social position (Davis, 2000).

Over the last few years there has been a growing sense of alienation in Scottish fishing communities. Fishers have traditionally been looked down upon by people from other occupations, and felt estranged from mainstream politics (Nadel-Klein 2000). More recently, the changes in fisheries management have left fishers, similarly to farmers, viewed by policymakers and the media as the “criminal” in the environmental crisis (Nuttall, 2000: 112). Scientists and officials question the skills and knowledge of the fishermen, and the next generation of fishers are choosing, and being encouraged, to gain conventional qualifications to enable them to work outside of fishing (Nuttall, 2000). The communities feel under attack, as Nuttall states:

“Criticism of fishermen is, by extension, criticism of the wider community and social networks of which fishermen are a part.”

(Nuttall, 2000: 114).

The effects of fisheries restructuring is similar to the experiences in the mining industry. Miners who are made unemployed have to deal with the loss of their occupational identity and networks and feel their skills as miners have been devalued (Waddington *et al*, 2001; Dicks *et al*, 1993). Younger miners especially felt a strong sense of loss, whereas older miners could perhaps see pit closure as early retirement (Strangleman, 2001). Women have had to deal with the worry of managing a household on a much smaller budget and the strains on relationships and routines caused by their partner's unemployment (Waddington *et al* 2001; Dicks *et al* 1993). Young people can no longer expect to find work in their communities and there is a fear that out-migration will lead to further social disintegration (Dicks *et al* 1993). However, this is mediated in some cases by strong community and family ties encouraging younger ex-miners to 'get by' as best they can in the locality without resorting to moving away (Strangleman 2001). The past is held in high regard, and the strong association with the mine still remains despite its closure (Pattison 1999). This reflects the experience of fishing communities and their relationship with the fishing industry.

2.7 Summary

Identities are based on interpretations of sameness and difference, and so useful to conceptualise the 'socio-cultural' issues around the fishing industry. Identities are a prerequisite for social interaction; by understanding ourselves and our place in the world we know how to place others and behave socially. They provide a sense of belonging. Identities are used here as relational, negotiated, performed. Individual and collective identities are based on the use of symbols and creation of boundaries. Community and a shared past are important symbols in defending collective identities against change. Place is also an important concept for this research. Places are created and given meaning through the performance of identity. An affinity with certain places is then used to express belonging and as a symbol of identity. This research is driven by fieldwork in the fishing industry of northeast Scotland where specific places are created and used in the negotiation of identity – the sea, the

household, and the community. The experience of northeast Scotland reflects and informs understandings of restructuring of other fisheries and industries. The following chapter describes the Scottish fishing industry and the recent restructuring here, followed by an analysis of the policy context.

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3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the context for this research by providing an introduction to the fishing industry, its role within the region of northeast Scotland and the management of fisheries through policy. Beginning with an introduction to the fishing industry, its methods, structure and size, the chapter moves on to discuss the industry's importance to northeast Scotland. The recent restructuring of the fishing sector is described, focussing on the impacts for the research area. The management of the fisheries at European, UK and Scottish levels is set out, exploring how these policies broadly approach social issues. The chapter concludes by assessing the contribution the social sciences have made to unpacking these social issues.

3.2 The fishing industry

This section of the thesis gives an introduction to the fishing industry, describing its main sectors and methods, and presenting information on fleet structure and size. Data are provided at three levels: the UK, Scotland and

northeast Scotland. Employment and landings data are used to give an indication of the direct importance of the fishing industry, together with a discussion of multipliers which illustrate the wider economic contribution.

3.2.1 The UK fishing industry

In 2005 the UK commercial fishing fleet consisted of 6,715 boats, with 5,134 of these under 10 metres in length (MFA, 2006). In the same year the industry provided employment for 12,647 people, 10,353 on a regular basis and 2,294 part-time (MFA, 2006). The total catch for the UK fleet into UK ports was 491,700 tonnes in volume, which was worth £456 million (MFA, 2006).

The fishing industry can be broken down by type of target species. The pelagic sector is the smallest by number of boats, just 23, but the largest by size of vessel, typically more than 50 metres in length (MFA, 2006). This sector targets the highly seasonal shoals of mackerel (January to March), blue whiting (April) and herring (July-August) (Scottish Parliament, 2001). These vessels use the purse seining method, surrounding a shoal with a net and pursing (closing) the bottom of the net to capture the fish, or trawling a net in the mid-waters where these species shoal (FRS, 2006). This sector landed 43% of the UK catch by volume and 22% by value in 2005 (MFA, 2006).

The demersal fleet, with vessels typically 20-25 metres in length, target mixed whitefish species that live on or near the seabed such as cod, haddock, whiting, monkfish and also Norwegian lobster (nephrops) (Scottish Parliament, 2001). Although not seasonal like the pelagic fleet, different species are more prevalent and targeted at different times of the year. This sector landed 32% of the UK catch by volume and 38% by value in 2005 (MFA, 2006). The fleet is predominantly made up of otter trawlers, where a net is trawled along the sea bed with two large otter boards used to keep the mouth of the net open, or pair trawling, where the net is towed between two

vessels (FRS, 2006). The demersal sector is the focus of this research. Further insight into the day to day practicalities of this method of fishing are provided through Peter and Kate’s story in Chapter 6.

The shellfish fleet is made up partly of vessels of similar length to the whitefish fleet using either single or pair trawling methods with a smaller mesh size in their nets (FRS, 2006). This sector also contains the majority of under 10 metre vessels, which use either mobile (nets) or static (pots and creels) gear. The shellfish sector landed 25% of the UK catch by volume and 40% by value in 2005 (MFA, 2006).

3.2.2 The Scottish fishing industry

Scotland is a key player within the UK fishing industry, representing 46% of the UK’s fishing vessels over 10 metres in 2004 (Scottish Executive, 2005). In 2005, Scottish landings accounted for 68% of the volume and 61% of the value of UK landings into UK ports (Scottish Executive, 2006). In 2005, the Scottish fishing industry was made up of 2,376 vessels, listed by sector in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Scottish fishing fleet, 2005

Sector	Number of vessels
Pelagic	25
Demersal	313
Shellfish	386
Under 10 metre	1,652
Total	2,376

Source: Scottish Executive, 2006²

² There are slight unexplained discrepancies between the UK and Scottish fisheries statistics. For example the total UK fleet had 23 pelagic boats in 2005 (MFA, 2006), yet for the same year Scotland is reported to have 25 (Scottish Executive, 2006).

The entire UK pelagic fleet are registered in Scotland, working from Shetland, Fraserburgh and Peterhead (Scottish Executive, 2006). Although the under 10 metre fleet has the largest number of vessels and are important in terms of employment, they are not as significant in terms of volume and value of landings. For example, in 2003 the Scottish under 10 metre fleet landed just 2% of the Scottish catch by volume and 7% by value (Scottish Executive, 2005).

In total, Scottish based vessels landed 359,900 tonnes by volume and £303 million by value into UK ports in 2005 (Scottish Executive, 2006). This is broken down by sector in table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Scottish fleet volume and value of landings into UK ports, 2005

Sector	Volume '000 tonnes	Value £ million
Pelagic	216.9	91.9
Demersal	88.3	101.6
Shellfish	54.7	110.0
Total	359.9	303.4

Source: Scottish Executive, 2006.

The three sectors have performed quite differently over the last ten years reflecting the challenges they have faced (RSE, 2004). The pelagic fleet faced severe difficulties in the 1970s with the near collapse of the herring fishery. Once these stocks recovered, technological advances and investment in modern vessels have led to a sector that is highly efficient and well managed, in part because of the small number of vessels. Profitability and return on investment are high, and with sustainable exploitation of stocks, the future for this sector looks positive. In contrast, the demersal sector has suffered over the last ten years. With ecological problems in key stocks and the resulting limitations placed on those targeting them, landings and profitability have fallen. The severe restructuring this sector has faced is returned to below. Overall the shellfish sector has been performing well, however, the under 10 metre vessels have suffered economic losses. Alongside concerns of over capacity in the under 10 metre fleet, there are

also fears that those facing hard times in the demersal sector may transfer to shellfish, placing extra pressure on the stocks (RSE, 2004).

In 2005, 4,971 people were employed on Scottish fishing vessels, 3,813 on a regular basis, 1,065 on an irregular basis and 93 as crofters (Scottish Executive, 2006). By sector in 2003, 5% were employed on pelagic vessels, 35% demersal and 60% shellfish (Scottish Executive, 2005). In total, the fish catching industry represents just 0.2% of the Scottish labour force (Scottish Executive, 2006). However, as is demonstrated below, the contribution of the fishing industry becomes more significant at smaller scales of analysis (for a review of the notion and geography of fisheries dependency see Symes, 2000b).

3.2.3 Fishing in northeast Scotland

The fishing industry is highly concentrated in particular locations, with northeast Scotland an important area within both the Scottish and UK contexts. This area is made up of the administrative fishing districts of Aberdeen, Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Buckie (which includes Lossiemouth) and so contains the study area for this research. In 2005, 491 vessels were registered in northeast Scotland, with 251 over 10 metres in length. For over 10 metre vessels, the northeast Scotland fleet accounts for 35% of the Scottish fleet and 17% of the UK fleet. Employment in the catching sector (both under and over 10 metre vessels) of northeast Scotland was 1,448 in 2005, accounting for 30% of Scotland's and 11% of the UK's employment in fishing. In the same year, 52% of the Scottish catch by volume and 50% by value, and 39% of the UK catch by volume and 34% by value, was landed into northeast Scotland's ports (Aberdeenshire Council, 2007).

The section of coast that forms the focus of this research is represented by Buckie and Fraserburgh fishing districts (see Figure 1.2 for a map of the study area). Fraserburgh fishing district, which includes Macduff, is the registered base for almost half of northeast Scotland's fleet with 223 vessels in 2005,

which provided employment for 764 people. Buckie fishing district, which stretches to Lossiemouth and Hopeman, had 73 registered vessels and 248 people employed (Aberdeenshire Council, 2007). The majority of boats in this area remain family owned, as compared to Aberdeen for example, where there has been a trend toward company ownership of boats (SAC, 1999).

As Buckie and Fraserburgh fishing districts fall into two different local authorities, directly comparable data for the percentage of fisheries employment within the towns is unavailable. However, Aberdeenshire Council suggest that 4% of Fraserburgh and 5% of Macduff's employment is in fisheries and agriculture (Aberdeenshire Council, 2005). Using 2001 census data, Moray Council state that fishing employment accounted for 7% in Portknockie, 4% in Findochty, 3% in Buckie and Cullen, and 2% in Lossiemouth (Moray Council, 2006). However, these snapshots of direct employment disguise both the greater economic dependence on fishing through associated industries and the restructuring that occurred in the years leading up to 2005.

The employment provided through the catching sector produces several multiplier effects. Fish processing is a major industry in northeast Scotland, with an estimated 70% of the catch landed into the area undergoing some level of processing locally (SAC, 1999). Of the 17 organisations in Fraserburgh that employ more than 50 people, eight are fish processors (Aberdeenshire Council, 2005). The majority of inputs into the fishing industry, such as equipment and supplies, are also provided locally (SAC, 1999). In Macduff the shipyard is one of the seven key employers with 30 or more employees (Aberdeenshire Council, 2005).

In 2002 the Scottish Executive undertook a study to assess the overall employment contribution of the fishing industry to Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2002). Although this study was carried out using 1999 data, and so does not reflect the restructuring that has taken place since, it provides a useful illustration of the broader impacts of the fishing industry. Using travel to work areas, they found that Fraserburgh had a direct employment in

fisheries, aquaculture and processing of 29%. However, once the indirect employment in ancillary services such as net making, and the induced employment in local services supported by the spending of fishing households had been taken into account, Fraserburgh's fishery dependent employment rose to 57%. Buckie's overall fishery dependent employment stood at 22% (Scottish Executive, 2002). A similar study conducted by the Strategy Unit in 2004 found Fraserburgh's fishery dependent employment stood at 20% in 2001, although whether these figures are directly comparable is unclear (Strategy Unit, 2004a).

3.3 Fisheries management and restructuring

The snapshots of 2005 presented above obscure the changes that have taken place as a result of the restructuring of the fishing industry. These are presented below following a brief introduction to how the industry is managed.

3.3.1 The policy context

Fisheries in the European Union (EU) have been managed under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) since its establishment in 1983. Under the CFP member states' 200 mile exclusive economic zones are subsumed into a European 'common pond' and managed collectively. The development and intricacies of the CFP and its implementation in the UK have been well documented from a variety of perspectives elsewhere (Royal Society of Edinburgh, 2004; Phillipson, 2002; Symes, 2005, 1999, 1997, 1995; Crean and Symes, 1996; Farnell and Elles, 1984). Of most interest here is how fisheries management through the CFP impacts upon the industry in Scotland. How social considerations are broadly considered through fisheries policy is dealt with in section 3.4.

The CFP comprises of four main strands of activity: conservation and the limitation of the environmental impacts of fishing, structures and fleet

management, markets, and relations with countries outside the EU (EC, 2004). The first two, conservation and structural management, are of particular interest in framing this research. Under the conservation remit of the CFP a system of Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas were established under the principle of 'relative stability' (RSE, 2004). This means that TACs for species are decided upon and allocated to nation states on the basis of historical shares of the total catch, with some allowances made for coastal areas where communities are dependent on fishing. Each nation state then has the responsibility of allocating the quota within the nation (EC, 2004). In the UK this is predominantly achieved by allocating quota to Producer Organisations, whose membership is individual vessel owners (Phillipson, 1999). TACs are decided on an annual basis through meetings of the EU Council of Ministers in December, informed by scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) but also influenced by political motivations from member states (Daw and Gray, 2005). As well as setting TACs, other technical measures are implemented under the conservation strand of the CFP. These include the setting of minimum mesh sizes (to prevent juvenile fish being caught) and the establishment of closed areas (the resting of exhausted fishing grounds to encourage their recovery) (EC, 2004).

The structures and fleet management strand of the CFP is concerned with matching the capacity of the European fleet to catch fish with the ecological health of the stocks, whilst encouraging the modernisation and development of the fleet (EC, 2004). There has been an historical overcapacity within the European fleet, which in the past was approached through Multi-Annual Guidance Programmes (MAGPs). MAGPs aimed to reduce fishing effort by removing vessels from the fleet, through decommissioning or restricting the amount of days vessels could spend at sea (Phillipson, 2002). There have been four MAGPs, however they have been shown to have failed to achieve the required reduction in fishing capacity (Daw and Gray, 2005). Since 2002 a new entry/exit system has been introduced which uses the vessel licensing system. All commercial fishing vessels must have a licence which states their capacity to catch fish (based on the technical capabilities of the vessel). The

new entry/exit system means that a licence will only be issued to a new vessel when a licence of at least the equivalent capacity is withdrawn (EC, 2004).

The CFP has been accused of many failings. The scientific advice on which it is based is understood as uncertain, limited in scope and remote from the actual practices of fishing. Advice is watered down in the decision making process by negotiation and trading between nations (Daw and Gray, 2005). The method of managing stocks through quota has been considered to be ineffective, and as encouraging the discarding of fish at sea (where fish that are caught over and above a vessel's quota are thrown back, many of them already dead or dying) (Wanlin, 2004). The use of annual TACs has been described as 'crisis management' rather than a long term sustainable approach to fisheries management (Symes, 2005). Rights and responsibilities within the system are seen as ill defined (Grieve, 2001; Symes, 1998). The CFP has been criticised for being too top-down, centralised and as operating with little involvement from stakeholders (Gray and Hatchard, 2003). Fishermen's sense of remoteness from the process has decreased the legitimacy of policy and encouraged rule breaking by individuals, which further undermines stock assessments and the success of policy (Symes, 2001).

Most fundamentally, the CFP has failed to conserve several fish stocks at acceptable levels, leading one commentator to observe that: "At best, the first 20 years of the CFP can be described as a period of 'sustainable overfishing'" (Symes, 2005: 259). Of course, the poor health of stocks reflects a wider problem in global fisheries that has been building since before the creation of the CFP. However, as Symes states: the EU policy makers' "crime has not been to create the crisis, but a failure to turn the situation around" (2001: 324). The reform of the CFP in 2002 was intended to deal with some of these failings (EC, 2001). However, at the turn of the century many key commercial species were outside safe biological limits, and in particular cod stocks were close to collapse (Symes, 2001). The response to these problems were severe restrictions on TACs, restrictions on days at sea and further reductions

in fleets through decommissioning; all of which impacted heavily on Scotland's fishermen.

3.3.2 Industry restructuring

Quotas for key demersal species have fallen dramatically over the last ten years. Between 1997 and 2007, cod quota for the North Sea and West of Scotland fisheries fell by 84%, whiting by 65% and plaice by 43%. Demersal vessels operating in these areas have also been restricted to an allocation of just 15 days at sea per month and other areas have been closed to fishing altogether or require specific permits (Aberdeenshire Council, 2007). To reduce overcapacity in the demersal sector, the Scottish Executive funded two rounds of decommissioning in 2001-02 and 2003-04, at a total cost of £56 million (Scottish Executive, 2005). These schemes removed 165 over 10 metre vessels from the Scottish demersal fleet (Scottish Executive, 2006). Owners of decommissioned vessels receive compensation for the loss of their vessel, which is scrapped so it can not return to the fleet.

In 2003 Seafish analysed the performance of the Scottish demersal sector (Seafish, 2003). They found that the number of vessels in the Scottish demersal fleet had fallen by 50% between 2000 and 2004. Employment in the demersal fleet had also fallen by 36% from 1998 to 2003, caused by the reduction in the number of boats, but also a reduction of employment on each boat. Incomes for whitefish boats fell 27% between 1998 and 2001, due to reductions in quota, restrictions on days at sea and depressed quayside prices caused in part by competition from imports. Over the same period expenses have risen, particularly through the costs of leasing extra quota, fuel and insurance price rises. This fall in income combined with a rise in expenses has forced some skippers to go to sea with less crew. Overall there has been a 64% drop in net profit levels for the whitefish fleet between 1998 and 2002. Debt levels within the fleet were estimated to be on average £500,000 per vessel, and with falling profits, many vessel owners were reported to be struggling to repay these debts. However, the Seafish report

suggests that vessel earnings had begun to stabilise at a low level in 2003 (Seafish, 2003). The future for this sector is by no means settled. In 2004 estimates suggested that the UK demersal sector still needed to reduce capacity by at least a further 13% to be sustainable (Strategy Unit, 2004a).

In terms of impacts at northeast ports, between 1995 and 2005 there has been a 3% decline in the volume and 13% decline in the value of landings of all species. Within the region Buckie experienced a decline of 62% in volume and 47% in value, with landings continuing to concentrate in the larger ports like Fraserburgh (here landings increased by 17% in volume and 23% in value). Demersal landings have been hardest hit as a result of the decreases in quota. For the northeast between 1995 and 2005, demersal landings fell by 50% by volume and 47% by value. Fraserburgh's volume of demersal landings fell by 41% and Buckie's by 82%. Over the period from 1995 to 2005 the northeast fleet has declined by 28%, losing 194 vessels in total. Within this region Buckie fishing district was hardest hit, losing 56% of its fleet over the same period. For vessels over 10 metres in length, Fraserburgh lost 95 (44%) and Buckie 82 (66%) (Aberdeenshire Council, 2007).

In northeast Scotland, direct employment in catching fell by 55% between 1995 and 2005, a loss of 1,770 jobs (Aberdeenshire Council, 2007). Again Buckie fishing district was hardest hit with a 65% loss of employment. However, despite the loss of employment in the fish catching sector, unemployment in northeast Scotland remains relatively low, 2% in Fraserburgh and Macduff compared to the Scottish average of 2.8% (Aberdeenshire Council, 2005). Although official statistics of the destination of former fishermen are not available, anecdotal evidence from people in the industry suggests that many have been absorbed into the off-shore oil and gas industry. However, the long term prospects for the oil and gas industry are also uncertain, and Aberdeenshire Council suggest that local employment in this sector will fall by 37% over the period 1996-2011 (Stead, 2005).

3.4 Social issues in fisheries policy

The above sections have demonstrated the economic importance of fishing to northeast Scotland and how the restructuring of the industry has impacted on the region. This section moves on to explore how these impacts are dealt with in fisheries policy, and how wider social issues relating to the industry are handled. Three key levels of policy are dealt with in turn: the European, UK and Scottish levels.

3.4.1 The European level

At the European level, long term social objectives have not been clear within the CFP and the socio-cultural impacts of fisheries policy seen as an externality to be dealt with after policy decisions have been made (Symes, 2000a; ESSFIN, 1999). This is exemplified by the production of an 'Action Plan' to counter the socio-economic consequences of the reform of the CFP after this reform had been decided (Commission of the European Communities, 2002). The complexities of including social objectives in management are not just a problem within the CFP, but a thorny issue for fisheries throughout the world (Olson, 2005). However, a system driven purely by bio-economic theory overlooks the needs of fishermen and results in non-compliance with regulations (Crean and Symes, 1996).

The data used in fisheries decision-making at a European level is narrowly defined. Annual decisions on quota are made largely on the biological advice from ICES (RSE, 2004). And when socio-economic factors are considered, they are usually couched in terms of economics and employment, as in the 'Action Plan' highlighted above (Commission of the European Communities, 2002). In 1999 the European Commission commissioned a European-wide project to collate and examine data on the socio-economic factors of dependency on fishing (SAC, 1999). The concepts of fisheries dependency and fishing dependent regions have been used to assess the success of fisheries policy (Symes, 2000a). Whilst these studies used a broad definition

of the 'fishing industry', taking into account fisheries, aquaculture, processing and ancillary services, and also considered the wider regional economy and industries, their conceptualisation of socio-economic dependency was narrowly defined to economic and employment contributions (SAC, 1999). Even with a narrow economic focus, they found the lack of comparable data within and between nations at appropriate levels of analysis a significant issue (see also Phillipson, 2002). The notion of dependency is complex, but several authors have argued that dependency can, and should, be conceptualised beyond employment and economics (Brookfield *et al*, 2005; Stead, 2005; Jacob *et al*, 2001; Symes, 2000b). The European Commission studies did consider 'cultural issues', however these were limited to a brief consideration of the level of fish eaten locally, the gender imbalance in the fish catching sector and levels of migration (SAC, 1999).

The reform of the CFP in 2002 brought about the creation of Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), with the aims of increasing management based on regional ecosystems and stakeholder involvement with each RAC made up of representatives of the industry, the environmental lobby and other interested parties. The reform of the CFP and the potential impact of these RACs is debated elsewhere (see for example Olson, 2005; Symes, 2005; Gray and Hatchard, 2003), but their main role is to offer advice during the European decision making process. The RAC set up for the North Sea contains a working group specifically considering the socio-economic dimensions of fishing to ensure that any socio-economic impacts of the advice given by the North Sea RAC (NSRAC) are flagged up and, where possible, solutions to mitigate negative impacts are identified (NSRAC, 2006). The development of this socio-economic focus has largely been driven by the inclusion of a representative of the North Sea Women's Network (Holmyard, 2006). The Socio-Economic Focus Group of the NSRAC have taken a broad understanding of 'socio-economic', including employment and incomes, but also exploring social structures, cultural and historical factors (NSRAC, 2006). Recognising the lack of data on the social dimensions of fishing, they are developing a Social Assessment Framework and working toward commissioning a North Sea wide study of social issues (Hatchard *et al*, 2006).

This would mean that socio-economic implications of fisheries management in the North Sea could be highlighted earlier in the decision making process.

3.4.2 The UK level

Within the UK, responsibility for the management of the Scottish fishing industry lies primarily with the devolved Scottish Executive through their Environment and Rural Affairs Department. Enforcement and control in Scottish waters is carried out by the Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency. However, certain issues are dealt with at a UK level, such as the development of broad strategies and the majority of dealings with the EU.

A recent key development within the UK context has been the production of the report 'Net Benefits: A Sustainable and Profitable Future for UK Fishing' (Strategy Unit, 2004a). With the restrictions on the fishing industry described above taking effect, in March 2003 the then Prime Minister commissioned his Strategy Unit to "assess the issues facing the UK marine fishing industry, and recommend action to create a stable future both for the industry itself and for the communities that depend upon it" (Strategy Unit, 2004a: 4). With a whole chapter devoted to "Community Strategies", Net Benefits has a distinct focus on the social issues within the industry. In fact, it cites "maintaining sustainable and profitable fishing opportunities for remote and dependent communities" as the third of six key challenges currently facing the industry³ (Strategy Unit, 2004a: 28).

The report examines the current situation within the industry and develops models of possible future scenarios, using biological and economic modelling.

³ The other five challenges are: ensuring conditions exist for the UK fishing industry to compete effectively on EU and global markets for fish products; rationalising and modernising the whitefish sector on a long-run sustainable basis, while ensuring stock recovery is successful; providing a clear framework for balancing the different uses of the marine environment and preserving long-run ecosystem integrity; ensuring management systems create the correct incentives to supply accurate information and produce a high level of compliance; and reforming UK and EU management systems to ensure long-run sustainability, including the prevention of future 'boom and bust' cycles (Strategy Unit, 2004a: 28).

With a particular focus on the demersal fleet, it is estimated that with the worst case scenario of stock collapse and severe economic pressure, the capacity within this sector would have to be reduced by 60% by 2013, and in the best case scenario by 13% (Strategy Unit, 2004a: 74). The impacts on communities are presented in terms of loss of employment, which in the worst case scenario could be between 45% and 59% and in the best case scenario could be between 12% and 22% (Strategy Unit, 2004a: 78). A distinction is made between 'fisheries dependent' communities and 'vulnerable' communities, highlighting the way in which change will not happen evenly across all fishing areas but is most likely to impact hardest on small, remote and/or rural communities. It is recommended that only those most dependent *and* vulnerable receive support (Strategy Unit, 2004a: 99). However, having identified fishing dependent communities, those which are also considered as vulnerable are not specified.

The Net Benefits report is supported by an analytical paper that focuses on fishing communities and regional development (Strategy Unit, 2004b). Here fisheries dependency is calculated in terms of percentage of total employment associated with fish catching (including catching, processing and indirect and induced employment) in Travel To Work Areas, and communities are defined as "groups of people who share common values, identities or assets – these can be based around a place, or common interests" (Strategy Unit, 2004b: 9-10). Although this understanding of community is flexible and well-suited to the industry, dependency and the benefits derived from the industry are narrowly defined in the report, solely around issues of employment. "Other benefits" from an active fishing industry are only briefly indicated, such as tourism, regional and local image, and in relation to culture and social fabric. However, as the technical paper points out: "These impacts are hard to isolate and quantify but are clearly very important for some fishing communities. Their importance will vary by location and for individual communities, in ways that cannot be picked up in this strategy" (Strategy Unit, 2004b: 27), but as the final report states, they should be "considered" in policy-making (Strategy Unit, 2004a: 42). Although there is recognition of the wider social benefits of

the fishing industry, aside from employment data, it is perceived that there is a lack of ways to assess them and take them onboard.

Net Benefits recommends that fisheries departments develop and adopt clear aims and objectives for fisheries management, including the development of explicit social aims. It is acknowledged that in the past there has been a reluctance to identify clear economic and social goals because of a fear that this would undermine environmental commitments, but that: "...this view is counter productive to effective stock management, and fails to account for the high social value of fisheries..." (Strategy Unit, 2004a: 124). The report recognises the reciprocal relationship between sustainable stock management and a profitable industry on the one hand, and vibrant fishing communities on the other. A suggested aim for fisheries management is put forward: "...to maximise the return to the UK of the sustainable use of fisheries resources and the protection of the marine environment" with the suggestion that sub-objectives for environmental, economic and social issues be established, although the content of these is not specified (Strategy Unit, 2004a: 124). 'Social issues' are thus clearly put on the agenda for fisheries management, although exactly what these are and how they relate to other objectives is not made entirely clear.

Some specific recommendations for securing a future for fishing communities are however produced. These include the need for fisheries departments and the industry to work more closely with those responsible for economic development and regeneration agencies to ensure fishing communities are included in strategic developments and have access to appropriate funds, the possibility of ring fencing quota for 'community quota schemes', as well as a requirement for further regionalisation of the CFP and greater stakeholder involvement.

After further stakeholder consultation the devolved administrations came together to produce a joint response to Net Benefits and develop ways of taking its recommendations forward. On the whole the report 'Securing the Benefits' supports the recommendations of the Strategy Unit, particularly with

regards to the need for clear aims and objectives. A shared aim is presented of a “fishing sector that is sustainable and profitable and supports strong local communities, managed effectively as an integral part of coherent policies for the marine environment” (DEFRA *et al*, 2005a: 13). To achieve this aim, the devolved administrations set out several key objectives, one of which being “to tackle social exclusion and promote long term prosperity in communities traditionally dependent on the fishing industry” (DEFRA *et al*, 2005a: 14). This will involve monitoring grant aid to fishing communities, alongside helping to ensure future European funding can be used for diversification, environmentally sensitive fishing methods and adding value through processing (DEFRA, *et al* 2005a: 51). However, as the report states, beyond this, economic development is also a devolved issue and should be dealt with by the devolved administrations separately. Finally, ‘Securing the Benefits’ also draws attention to the use of science in the decision making process. Although the main focus is on biological and stock assessment data, the fisheries administrations commit to “collaborating with other funders to meet the need for better economic and socio-economic information” (DEFRA *et al*, 2005a: 30).

The latest development at the UK level is the beginnings of a consultation process to draw up a ‘UK National Strategic Plan for Fisheries’ as required for the European Fisheries Fund. The consultation includes a SWOT analysis for the industry, before moving on to suggest objectives and priorities for 2007-2013 (DEFRA *et al*, 2005b). Very few social issues are identified in the SWOT analysis for the catching sector. A strong local fishing-based heritage and tradition that can be used in the marketing of products is seen as a strength. However, early retirement, poor recruitment and retention, and people leaving to find higher paid alternative employment are highlighted as weaknesses (DEFRA *et al*, 2005b: 8). The consultation document raises the question as to how structural funds can be used to improve the sustainability and quality of life in fishing dependent communities. A main priority is tackling social exclusion and the promotion of long term prosperity in communities traditionally dependent on the fishing industry (DEFRA *et al*, 2005b). As part of this, it is suggested there is a need to build on existing research into fishing

dependent communities to assess levels of vulnerability and dependence in order to be able to effectively prioritise interventions.

3.4.3 The Scottish level

As previously stated, much of the responsibility for fisheries management in Scotland is devolved from the UK Government to the Scottish Executive through its Environment and Rural Affairs Department. At this level, the importance of social and community issues were recognised in the 'Strategic Framework for the Scottish Sea Fishing Industry' published in 2001. This framework aims to develop a sustainable fishing industry by focussing on five key themes. At the centre of the framework are sustainable fish stocks, with an inclusive approach to fisheries management, support for fishing communities, a focus on quality and an economically competitive industry all supporting the central theme (SEERAD, 2001: 4). Fishing communities are defined by both geographical location and sector. The potential conflict between support for local communities and ensuring industry viability at the macro level is recognised. The strategy aims to support communities by ensuring, among other things, that distinctive Scottish conditions (such as fleet structure in specific locations) are taken account of at the European level, that impacts of fisheries policy on rural communities are taken into consideration at the Scottish level, and by considering measures to enable diversification and development of fisheries activities.

At the same time as the Strategy Unit was considering the future of the UK fishing industry, the Royal Society of Edinburgh recognised the particular importance of fishing to Scotland and developed a wholly independent inquiry focussing specifically on the future of the Scottish fishing industry. The report has a broad focus, covering the development of the CFP, the potential role of aquaculture, and two chapters devoted to assessing the role of science in fisheries management and the role of fisheries in the marine environment (RSE, 2004). In considering the social and economic impacts of the current state of the fisheries and their management, dependency is again defined in

terms of percentage of total employment in travel to work areas. The decline in employment, net profitability and return on capital within the demersal sector is charted, before moving on to suggest some practical solutions to some of these issues. These include the potential for debt restructuring, the development of an industry finance corporation, changes to the ownership structure of the fleet and the potential for structural funds to be used for early retirement and resettlement grants (RSE, 2004: 12-25).

In considering options for managing the fisheries in a sustainable way, the inquiry critiques the current system of management for being too complicated, lacking in transparency and industry involvement, and for allowing science to be distorted by politics. It goes on to state: "It is, therefore, easy to understand the frustration of the Scottish industry and the sense of despair felt in fishing communities at their exclusion from the process, the apparent lack of urgency in dealing with the industry's problems and the absence of concern for the fate of the fishing communities" (RSE, 2004: 68). The report concludes with several recommendations. One of the most urgent is the need for the industry and ministers to agree and reach a sustainable and profitable demersal fleet, which although may well impact negatively upon fishing dependent communities, will also help to promote confidence in the future of the industry and prevent further out-migration and rural deprivation (RSE, 2004).

As part of the development of a National Fisheries Plan the Scottish Executive has also developed a 'Sustainable Framework for Scottish Sea Fisheries'. This framework shares its aim with that of 'Securing the Benefits': "A Scottish sea fishing industry that is sustainable and profitable and supports strong local communities, managed effectively as an integral part of coherent policies for the marine environment" (Scottish Executive, 2005: 15). A sustainable fishing industry is seen as vital to maintaining viable communities around the coast. One of the key ways the report suggests this could be achieved is through better decision-making informed by interdisciplinary research that brings together biological and socio-economic specialisms. The report

recognises a lack of adequate data on Scottish fishing communities, and commits to commissioning a fisheries dependency study.

At all three levels of policy therefore there is a growing recognition of the need to take into account the social impacts of fisheries policy. However, this is consistently defined narrowly in terms of employment levels alone. Although wider social considerations are alluded to, there is no clear definition of what these might be and how they could be assessed. Further research by and collaboration with the social sciences is called for. The following section sets out the contribution of the social sciences so far.

3.5 The contribution of the social sciences

The study of fisheries has historically been dominated by biological and economic research (ESSFiN⁴, 1999). However, as illustrated in the final sections of the previous chapter, the social sciences have made important contributions to the understanding of fisheries. Early reviews of this field found a wealth of work which focuses particularly on the ethnography of tropical artisan fisheries (Nadel-Klein and Davies, 1988; Acheson, 1981). The fisheries social sciences have widened since the 1960s to incorporate social and cultural concerns through three key themes: property rights, management and policy, and social relations (ESSFiN, 1999). Of most interest here is the work on social relations, which has developed from more general ethnographic community studies, to thematic work on issues such as social organisation at sea and on land, the interaction between fishing communities and 'modernity', and analysis of the values placed on different types of fishing knowledge.

The formation of the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1961 provided the opportunity for

⁴ The European Social Science Fisheries Network (ESSFiN) was an EU funded project that ran between 1996 and 1999, to review the progress made by fisheries social science and to identify issues for further research.

anthropologists and sociologists from North America and Scandinavia to work together on research into the issues facing marginal fishing dependent communities (ESSFiN, 1998). This Institute has focussed on using issues of gender to explore fishing, producing critical publications such as Nadel-Klein and Davis' (1988) edited collection "To Work and To Weep: Women in Fishing Economies". The ongoing ecological crisis in the North Atlantic fish stocks has encouraged the development of research into the impacts of resource crisis, and how communities and individuals negotiate these challenges (Women's Studies International Forum, 2000; ESSFiN, 1998; Davis and Nadel-Klein, 1997).

In the UK context, much of the fisheries social science has sought to understand the policies and management of fishing (Brookfield *et al*, 2005; Daw and Gray, 2005; Stead, 2005; Symes, 2005, 2001; Phillipson, 2002). Work by Nuttall has briefly considered the socio-cultural impacts of fisheries restructuring in Scotland (Nuttall, 2000; Nuttall and Burnett, 1998), but without the depth of the studies from Norway and Newfoundland identified above. Sustained ethnographic research through the lens of gender has been developed by Nadel-Klein who has worked throughout Scotland, including in the northeast, but has not engaged with the current restructuring of the industry (Nadel-Klein, 2003; 2000; 1988).

The ESSFiN project found that underlying almost all fisheries social science has been the ambition to:

"present a more balanced and holistic treatment of fisheries and their management, restoring to the equation those factors which fundamentally reductionist sciences of fish stock assessments and economics have largely excluded."

(ESSFiN, 1999: 25).

The development of a coherent fisheries social science discipline has been hampered by the often dispersed and isolated position of researchers, with research findings published in a diffuse range of publications. This lack of a

coherent voice compared to the well-established biological and economic disciplines has reduced the impact of the social sciences on policy (ESSFiN, 1999).

3.6 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the importance of northeast Scotland to the UK and Scottish fishing industry, and the economic importance of fishing to northeast Scotland. However, the industry has undergone a period of intense restructuring which has had dramatic implications for the running of vessels. Fisheries policy has begun to recognise the social repercussions of restructuring, but has yet to find a way of conceptualising or assessing them. Social science research on fisheries is a growing field, however it has struggled to make its voice heard compared to the biological and economic sciences. The following chapter presents the methodological approach used to explore the implications of restructuring through fieldwork in northeast Scotland.

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4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological approach and the practical methods used to generate and analyse the materials that form the empirical basis of this research. The chapter begins with an introduction to the qualitative approach chosen. The following sections move through the practical processes used in this research beginning with how ‘the field’ was framed. The politics and practicalities of researching fishing households are discussed, followed by the interview method used and analysis through coding supported by the software Atlas.ti. Finally the production of this text is briefly considered. This linear format is somewhat artificial and is used for ease of presentation rather than to imply that the research flowed smoothly from one stage to the next or to “downplay the often chaotic and unplanned nature of social research” (Davies, 1999: 27). Indeed, as will be discussed later, an iterative approach where the traditional stages of reading, fieldwork and writing are blended together was an active part of my research strategy. This chapter is an intentionally reflexive account of the research process which illustrates the complexities, success and lessons learnt during this research.

4.2 Methodological approach

This research is informed by a range of perspectives, debates and issues from several academic disciplines including cultural geography, sociology and anthropology. Qualitative methodologies are employed in the social sciences as they offer the potential to:

“...understand lived experience and to reflect on and interpret the understandings and shared meanings of people’s everyday social worlds and realities” (Dwyer and Limb, 2001: 6).

Qualitative methodologies have undergone critiques from a variety of perspectives, particularly from feminist, post-structuralist and post-modern perspectives (Crang, 2003; 2002; England, 1994; McDowell, 1992). One of the key methodological themes central to much of this varied work is the need for open, honest and critically reflexive research (Crang, 2003; Limb and Dwyer, 2001; Phillips, 2000; Davies, 1999). The influences of feminism, post-structuralism and post-modernism have led to a shift in the social sciences, moving away from positivist thinking and methodologies, towards embracing the contradictory and culturally constructed nature of the social world and to value the complexities inherent in the processes of ‘doing research’ (England, 1994).

The notion of an objective, neutral researcher who uncovers some kind of truth from fieldwork is rejected. Instead, the process of research is increasingly seen as the co-construction of a version of events, by both those being researched and the researcher, and is shaped by the personal histories and complexities of all involved (Fielding, 2000; McDowell, 1999; Cook and Crang, 1995). The ‘inter-subjective’ knowledge produced by this kind of qualitative research is not only an inevitable outcome of social research but can also be described as its strength, provided it is undertaken in a rigorous and open fashion (Dwyer and Limb, 2001; Hughes *et al*, 2000; England, 1994).

Although there is a wealth of methods that come under 'qualitative' and a variety in the ways in which they may be applied, they are associated with "an intersubjective understanding of knowledge, an in-depth approach, focus on positionality and power relations, contextual and interpretive understandings" (Dwyer and Limb, 2001: 6). Smith (2001) goes beyond this, stating that the choice between qualitative and quantitative research is about political and ethical issues, that qualitative methods place great importance on 'lay' perspectives, and can be used to challenge 'top-down' knowledge production. The definition of ethnography is the subject of much debate (Herbert, 2000; Hughes *et al*, 2000). Whilst this research is not a 'traditional' ethnography, in the style of authors such as Cohen (1987), I have employed many of the methods and perspectives that can be described as 'ethnographic' using Davies' understanding of "a research process using a variety of (mainly qualitative) research techniques but including engagement in the lives of those being studied over an extended period of time" (1999: 4). The product of this approach to research draws heavily on the experiences of fieldwork and places emphasis on the descriptive detail this allows (Davies, 1999).

Chapter 2 sets out the way in which identity is conceptualised in this research. The focus is on an understanding of identity as relational, constructed and negotiated through performance. Identity is an inherently social concept, making it suited to exploration through a methodological approach that places emphasis on interpreting social worlds and meanings. Qualitative ethnographic approaches using in-depth interviewing and participant observation have been applied successfully to identity research in other contexts (see for example Hurdley, 2006; MacKenzie *et al*, 2006; Waitt and Hartig, 2005; Willott and Griffin, 2004; Marshall, 2001). A further key approach to exploring identity construction has been through the analysis of texts and images in publications (see for example Morris and Evans, 2001; Brandth and Haugen, 2000; Woodward, 1998; Brandth, 1995). Although there has not been room for analysis of this type of material here, an interesting avenue for future research would be the analysis of the representation of fishing and fishers in publications, for example in the industry newspaper 'Fishing News'.

Within fisheries research sustained ethnographic work has been usefully and successfully applied to the contexts of Newfoundland and Norway to understand the cultural aspects of the industry from the perspectives of those who live and work within it (Power, 2005; Binkley, 2002; Davies, 2000; Gerrard, 2000; Neis, 2000; Yodanis, 2000; Pettersen, 1996; Nadel-Klein and Davies, 1988). These authors have spent much of their academic careers working with men and women from various fishing communities to produce knowledge of their worlds from the bottom up. These authors have used interviews and participant observation to illustrate the impacts of industry restructuring on individuals, households and communities.

In the UK context, there are several earlier examples of ethnographic research on fisheries, for example Cohen's study of Whalsay (1987), Tunstall's (1962) study of the Hull deep-sea trawlermen and Robinson's more recent reflections on the same industry (1996), and Thompson *et al*'s study on the impact of the industrialisation of the fishing industry on men, women and communities (1983). More recently research on the UK fishing industry has sought to address questions relating to the policies and management of the industry and so has tended to be more heavily based on interviews with those linked to the industry through specific organisations such as Producer Organisations and local authorities, and the analysis of texts and grey literature (Brookfield *et al*, 2005; Daw and Gray, 2005; Stead, 2005; Symes, 2005, 2001; Phillipson, 2002; Nuttall, 2000; Nuttall and Burnett, 1998).

However, the feminist researcher Nadel-Klein has paid sustained attention to the fishing communities of Scotland, including those along the Moray Firth (Nadel-Klein, 2003; 2000). Her work focuses on the changing role of women, from the development of fishing villages to the present day and is based upon a combination of interviews and participant observation. Munro's doctoral work on women married to fishermen in a northeast Scottish village has also used an ethnographic approach, but has yet to be made fully available due to the sensitive nature of her material. However, her more recent work utilises her fieldwork from northeast Scotland to explore relationships between work, family and community, particularly in relation to the oil industry (Munro, 2000).

The body of work from Newfoundland and Norway demonstrate how qualitative, ethnographic approaches can be successfully applied to illuminating the cultural aspects of fishing and the impacts of industry restructuring. This research draws on their approaches to explore the current context within the UK.

4.3 Fieldwork

Conducting fieldwork has intentionally been an ongoing process throughout this research. I have been up to Scotland, to 'the field', at least six times each year for periods ranging from a long weekend to three weeks. Cook and Crang (1995) advocate this approach of merging the stages of research, as opposed to reading, then doing, then writing. They suggest that it reduces the potential for building up a literature-based picture of 'the field' that bears no resemblance to the lived experiences of the people who are the focus of the research and encourages the creation of a feasible project. Combining reading and fieldwork has certainly enabled me to remain grounded, relating academic literature to real people, and to keep check on the research direction.

This approach has also had other advantages. As will be explored below, my fieldwork has been based on an extensive network of contacts that has been developing since my Masters fieldwork in 2003. I have built relationships with people who have become key gatekeepers and have enabled this research to progress. The continued interest and commitment I have shown has built mutual trust, without which I could not have had such open discussions or met many of the people who participated in this research. Although I have kept in contact with some people between periods of fieldwork by phone and email, these relationships could not have been sustained without regular face-to-face contact. Frequent visits to the area has not only helped me to maintain access and generate 'better data', perhaps more importantly it has also enabled the (partial) resolution of a key ethical issue. Not only would it have been difficult to call people I had spoken to during the summer of 2003 and

expected them to take part in this research according to my timetable, it would have been unethical, a “dash into ‘the field’” to “raid” people’s lives, of the kind Shurmer-Smith warns against (2002: 96).

4.3.1 Framing ‘the field’

The geographical boundary around this research stretches along the Moray Firth from Hopeman to Fraserburgh (see map, Figure 1.2). This was created in part for practical reasons, but more importantly it kept the research contained in a particular location whilst including a selection of settlements that range from Lossiemouth where the harbour is no longer fishing-active, Buckie and Macduff where fishing use of the harbour has declined, to Fraserburgh which is still very much a fishing port, and the smaller villages in between. In terms of fishing type, I have concentrated on the demersal sector, which, as is discussed in Chapter 3, has been the focus of the most intense restructuring.

Previous research has shown the importance of the household as a unit in responding to industrial restructuring (Neis, 2000; Skaptadottir, 2000; Woodrow, 1998; Pettersen, 1996), and the centrality of women to the fishing industry, its households and communities (Women’s Studies International Forum Special Issue, 2000). As such I decided to focus on fishing households, interviewing both men and women. The inclusion of those no longer active in the industry, either retired or having left the industry, allowed the exploration of fishing identities when the household was no longer actively fishing. In terms of the demographic characteristics of these households, I worked to ensure access to a wide variety of perspectives (Cook and Crang, 1995), including across age ranges and throughout the geographical area. More detail on the sample characteristics and the implications for this research is presented in Chapter 5. The sample achieved was undoubtedly affected by the use of snowballing and gatekeepers, as discussed below.

4.3.2 Using snowballing and gatekeepers

With no direct relationship to the fishing industry I have developed an extensive network of contacts through several methods and with varying degrees of success. The main and most successful method has been through using gatekeepers and snowballing contacts from each new contact, as described by Cook and Crang (1995). Beginning with an acquaintance who was part of Moray Makes Waves, a group of fishermen's wives who were working together to support the industry, and a contact who works in fisheries for one of the local authorities, I began to build up a network of potential participants. At the end of interviews I asked participants if they could suggest other people who may be interested in taking part. Some have suggested friends, neighbours or colleagues, and others have not identified anyone.

This method of snowballing out from participants obviously does not produce a random sample of a given population. However, it does provide a useful way of accessing potential participants from different social networks (Bernard, 2006; Haralambos and Holburn, 1990). A random sample is not generally the aim of qualitative research; instead it can be validated through "theoretical sampling" and reaching "theoretical saturation". Theoretical sampling refers to :

"...gaining selective access to appropriate groups of people who may be concerned and/or involved in living through the research problem and encouraging them to teach the researcher about it from *their* various perspectives."

(Cook and Crang, 1995: 11, original emphasis).

Theoretical saturation is the point where the researcher is being told stories that repeat those they have already heard. It is therefore not the number of interviews or representativeness of participants, but the "*quality* and *positionality* of the information they can offer" (Cook and Crang, 1995: 11, original emphasis; Davies, 1999). However, in being selective and defining

who counts as appropriate the researcher sets parameters around potential participants and these must be reasoned and made explicit (Bernard, 2006).

The network of people that have been suggested to me has been interesting in itself and illustrative of some of the cultural relationships in the industry. Many of the same names have cropped up time and time again, especially those that are considered 'good fishermen', and men who hold positions in fishermen's organisations, who tend to be older or retired fishermen (this is described in more detail in the following chapter). In order to gain other perspectives, I have had to return to those who have been able to suggest participants, my gatekeepers, and specifically ask for younger fishermen and those that have left the industry. I also noted a geographical bias, as my strongest, most 'useful' gatekeepers have been towards the west end of the Moray Firth, in Buckie and Lossiemouth, and so I focussed attention on gaining access to households at the east end of the coast.

Although individuals have recommended family members, friends and neighbours, my main gatekeepers have been those involved in organised groups, such as Moray Makes Waves and another women's group the Cod Crusaders, or fishermen's organisations. These people hold positions where they have perhaps greater knowledge or overview of others involved in the industry. Working through gatekeepers in this way can be problematic; they have their own agendas and hold a powerful position in terms of access to study areas (de Laine, 2000). Their assessment of your intentions and identities, and their positions within the study area, can make or break the development of a successful research relationship with them and others (Cook and Crang, 1995). However, when utilised sensitively they can be a key way of meeting other participants. They have been central to this research. I have carefully considered their various positions, especially with regard to the complex political situation in the industry, and tried to cultivate contacts across the spectrum of interest groups. Being able to refer to someone known in the locality has been invaluable, as my attempts at 'cold calling' described below show. However I have had to be aware that using the names of, for example, the Cod Crusaders or Moray Makes Waves had its

own meanings and connotations, as described in the following section. It was vital to make sure that potential participants were aware of my own research agenda and the nature of my relationship with these groups.

During the initial period of fieldwork for my Masters research (Williams, 2003), I attempted to use other methods of gaining access to participants which were largely unsuccessful. Spending time around the harbour, I had asked for potential contacts in several of the 'fish offices' (agents who deal with much of the paperwork for the boats). Fishermen who were out working on nets on the quayside were pointed out to me and the staff suggested I approach them directly. Although responses were friendly, with hindsight this was an unrealistic and unfair approach, as although the harbour is a 'public space' it is also one of the fishermen's places of work and I was interrupting them out of the blue. The fishermen were obviously busy and although some were interested in my research most declined to take part, however one gave me his details and was happy to take part in a phone interview later in the day.

Other fish offices suggested I leave my contact details to be passed on to the skippers they dealt with. I prepared a short letter explaining who I was and my research intentions and asked them to contact me if they were interested in taking part. Only one fisherman responded to this line of approach, and this was someone who had been suggested to me several times and so I had written a note on the generic letter saying how I knew of him. This impressed upon me the importance of being able to refer to gatekeepers and using a personal approach to contacting people, and led me to ruling out sampling from a list of active fishermen. My experiences were similar to those of Kaplan (1991) who also highlights the value of working through gatekeepers and local networks to access fishermen.

4.3.3 Politics of researching fishing households

This research was carried out during what has been a politically and economically sensitive time for those involved in the fishing industry. At the

time of the first period of fieldwork in summer 2003, those who had successfully applied to have their boats decommissioned had received their offers and were considering whether to accept. This was a time of great uncertainty for those involved and there was some level of local speculation in conversations and in the media as to who would get offered what and whether they would take it. I initially experienced some suspicion and concern that I might be from the press, similar to Green (1993) as she researched the miners' strike of 1984/5, or from the fisheries authorities, similar to Kaplan (1991) as she approached fishermen in New England. It was at these times that being able to use the names of other local contacts was invaluable, and although I always carried identification from the university, this was generally enough to reassure people of my position.

As well as these time-specific issues, I have had to work my way round other longer-term political complexities surrounding the industry. The subject of the CFP and the possibility of the UK or Scotland's withdrawal from it is a thorny issue that has created divisions in the fishing industry. The Fishermen's Association Limited formed as a breakaway group from the Scottish Fishermen's Federation based specifically on this issue. Although I was not focussing on this subject or these organisations, people's allegiances to them often became clear through conversations and the people they suggested as potential participants. As such I had to be careful to ensure that these divisions were not clouding my research.

This issue also complicated my relationships with the two women's groups. Moray Makes Waves had consciously tried to steer clear of this debate, as they saw these political divisions as unhelpful to their work. They have, however, accepted small amounts of funding from the Scottish Whitefish Producers' Association whose concentration on working within the CFP perhaps links them with this side of the issue. By contrast, withdrawal from the CFP is a central aim of the overtly political Cod Crusaders and they have worked closely with FAL, the Save Britain's Fish campaign, and the Scottish Nationalist Party, among others. This increased the need to be sensitive

when using them as gatekeepers, and to ensure that I did not become too closely associated with either group.

4.3.4 Practicalities of research among fishing households

Researching fishing households also presented unique practical issues. I had initially intended to interview husbands and wives from the same households, however, as is to be expected in social research, practicalities often disrupt such plans (Cook and Crang, 1995). In some cases it was possible to interview both partners. However, in others the fisherman would be away at sea, or the woman would have other commitments, and their busy lives would prevent them from both taking part. Other potential participants have not been interested in taking part, which is of course to be expected. However, in some cases where I have interviewed fishermen, their partner has expressed a reluctance to take part, feeling they had nothing to contribute as they weren't fishermen. Although I have tried to make it clear that I was interested in getting both partners' perspectives, some women felt they would not be 'worth' interviewing, reflecting the way in which women's knowledge has traditionally been excluded from fisheries issues (Gerrard, 1995).

Carrying out social research that requires participants to commit a significant amount of their time to interviews inevitably means working out how to fit around their day-to-day commitments. Fishing households are no exception, and along with familiar requirements of family and work, they present some idiosyncratic challenges specific to the industry. The nature of a fisherman's work means that he is away at sea for extended periods of time, and so actually contacting them requires persistence and gaining an understanding of their specific work patterns (Kaplan, 1991). For some fishermen the changing nature of their occupation has meant that their work patterns are based around, for example, a week-on-week-off type schedule, whereby having established which week it is, it can be relatively easy to contact them. For others their time away is less regimented and more dependent on variable

factors such as the weather, price of fish, previous (un)successful trips and so required greater flexibility in (re)arranging interviews.

Some of the fishermen who took part in interviews spend much less than a week at home, being back for only a couple of days before another seven or eight away at sea. With such a short period of time at home it becomes very precious to the family, as well as an essential time to catch up on sleep missed whilst on board the boat and get kit washed. Also for skippers to tend to any damaged equipment from the previous trip and prepare for the next. This made it especially important to be completely honest and flexible about the length of time interviews may take and sensitive to the intrusion on people's lives. With these issues in mind, when working with women in fishing households, it has often been more practical and acceptable to arrange the interviews for when their husband is away at sea. This is not to imply that these women sit at home with nothing to do, patiently waiting for their husbands to return! It can be equally, if not more problematic to schedule a two hour slot around the demands of childcare, home and paid work, social lives and other commitments.

4.4 Fishing household interviews

The main style of interviewing used was face-to-face semi-structured interviews, although pre-arranged telephone interviews were occasionally used when it was not practical to meet with a participant. This approach has allowed the creation of specific periods of time set aside for the purpose of generating data, as opposed to the more impromptu nature of participant observation (Davies, 1999). This style of interviewing allows participants to tell their own stories and express their unique perspectives on the issues raised (Bennett, 2002a; Smith, 2001).

4.4.1 The interview process

The physical setting of an interview undoubtedly affects the atmosphere and content of the interaction that takes place (Cook and Crang, 1995). In arranging interviews I offered to go to people's homes in order to reduce the disruption to their day, but also offered to meet at another location of 'their choice'. The majority of interviews took place in participants' homes, which provided a private relaxed space for open discussion of what were sometimes quite personal issues (Pini, 2002). It also provided reference points for different stories (Cook and Crang, 1995), such as the photographs of various fishing boats, which were proudly displayed on many of these households' walls. Through the telling of stories about these objects, participants tell stories of themselves (Hurdley, 2006).

The interviews were a combination of one-to-one, husband and wife, one-off and serial interviews, each providing different interactions and perspectives and presenting unique benefits and challenges. The majority have been on a one-to-one basis, which has allowed me to concentrate on one person's perspective and stories, however, being based in the home the interviews were often interrupted by other family members coming in and out (Bennett, 2002a; Davies, 1999). Although this can seem quite disruptive, it introduces new dynamics similar to those achieved through interviewing husband and wife together (Aitken, 2001; Davies, 1999). Interviews with more than one person are, in my experience, more difficult to 'manage', especially as husbands and wives are often so familiar that they can slip into local or personal dialect that as an outsider can be difficult to follow. However, this, and the dynamics between those taking part can produce interesting avenues for further questions (Valentine, 1999). Interviewing couples together requires sensitivity, as what may seem a mundane question can be quite disruptive (Aitken, 2001). My inquiries about housework sometimes caused bristling or sarcasm between the couple. However, this is surely true of all interviews, and more often led to laughter. When interviewing couples together, it was often difficult to hear the woman's opinions on the fishing industry. Either the husband would immediately answer the question or the wife would defer to

him, a common problem of joint interviewing (Arksey, 1996). Whereas in one-to-one interviews women usually offered confident, well-informed perspectives on these issues.

Serial interviews offered the opportunity to follow individuals over a period of time, introduce 'new' issues not discussed in initial interviews and to revisit, clarify and explore issues already raised (Cook and Crang, 1995). Where appropriate and possible, I have been back to people who took part in my fieldwork to see how their lives have changed and to explore issues that have become more important as my research focus has developed.

I approached interviewing as an opportunity for "generating materials" (Whatmore, 2003), whereby the researcher and participants are both active in constructing knowledge of the social world (Davies, 1999; Cook and Crang, 1995). In each interview I used a pre-prepared schedule listing the points I wanted to cover. This provided a systematic approach, but tipped the balance of power in my favour through my definition what is the 'relevant field' (Bennett, 2002a; Collins, 1998). In order to redress this imbalance the schedule was quite broad and used in a flexible way, allowing participants to talk about whatever they felt was relevant (Opie, 1992). The schedule was initially informed by the literature, but developed over time as new issues arose and others become less relevant. The content of the schedule was principally biographical, including family history, education, employment and 'life-events' such as marriage and children, to explore changes over time (Chamberlayne *et al*, 2000). In interviews with both fishermen and their wives I used broadly the same schedule, with both asked about their partner's biography, work and roles. As changes in the industry and settlements are a key focus of this research, these points were also covered in interviews. For those who are still in the industry, I asked fishermen to take me through 'an average trip' and wives to talk through their daily routines, in order to discuss everyday and perhaps seemingly mundane activities where identity lies. There was not usually time to discuss these issues during the first interview, with the biographical aspects typically lasting at least an hour, and so were

usually the focus of second interviews. For those who have left the industry, the decision to leave and how things have changed were introduced.

It is always important to prepare for interviews, to ensure that you know enough about the subject to maintain and understand the 'conversation' (Cook and Crang, 1995). To do this, as well as academic texts and policy documents, I have been reading 'Fishing News' to keep up with current issues in the industry. Many method texts also advise the importance of learning the language the interview will be conducted in (Davies, 1999; Cook and Crang, 1995). Reading 'Fishing News' allowed me to learn many of the technical terms used in the industry, however, I was not quite prepared for the local words used instead of these technical terms or the dialect, which I had to learn as I went along. In some ways this was quite advantageous. As an 'outsider' I was not expected to understand these words or phrases, and in asking for an explanation I was given detailed descriptions of what participants saw as simple things.

4.4.2 Recording data

Recording the interviews, rather than relying on note-taking or writing up from memory, was important in my research strategy to access the way in which people talk about the fishing industry and their lives. Recording interviews allows researchers to maintain 'normal' conversations, to concentrate on what is being said and on follow-up questions, whilst also recording the detail that is required for analysis (Davies, 1999; Cook and Crang, 1995). Having a recorder in the room does change the dynamics of an interaction, having the potential to stifle what a participant feels comfortable talking about, but it also makes clear that it is a research setting (Bennett, 2002a). All interviews were conducted on the promise of confidentiality with respect to other participants and anonymity in research outputs. With these assurances, most people I interviewed seemed quite happy to be recorded, and after initial nerves (on both sides) the conversations flowed quite easily. Along with the recording, I took brief notes to jot down key points and follow-up questions, maintaining my performance as 'an interviewer' (Bennett, 2002a).

As the intention was to use direct quotes from interview transcripts, it was important to gain written as well as verbal consent from participants in order to comply with UK copyright law (Valentine, 2001). I developed a consent form using advice from other researchers, and drawing on best practice from the British Sociological Association (BSA, 2002) and the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS, 2005). The consent form was introduced at the beginning of interviews and participants asked if they were willing to sign it after the interview when they were aware of the discussions that had taken place. All participants were happy to sign the form.

As advocated by Bennett (2002a) and Cook and Crang (1995), each interview was written up as soon as possible in my research diary. Here I recorded those aspects of the interview that could be described as participant observation and would not be contained on the tapes (Bennett, 2002b). These included the context of the interaction, the atmosphere or relationship developed with the participant, and early forms of analysis, such as key or unusual points that had been discussed and how these fitted into my ideas. These notes were added to the interview transcriptions and analysed alongside them, as described below.

The audio recordings were fully transcribed soon after the interviews, as this provided the opportunity to go back through them and use each period of fieldwork to inform the next. Although full transcription can be a lengthy and sometimes tedious process, the narrative form desired from and generated by these interviews could not be recorded and analysed by partial transcriptions. I also felt it important to record participant's speech and ideas literally 'in their own words' as I wanted to be able to allow their 'voices' to be central to the final text (Opie, 1992). I have however found transcribing quite a frustrating experience, as it is difficult to capture the dynamics and subtle meanings of speech in a textual form.

4.5 Analysis

Analysis is an ongoing process that begins with framing the field and defining the research agenda, carrying on through the generation of materials to their transformation into a research text (Davies, 1999; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Furthermore, the cyclical nature of this research has allowed periods of fieldwork, interspersed with some preliminary analysis, before returning to 'the field', and so there has not been just one single discreet stage of formal analysis. This kind of approach is advocated by Coffey and Atkinson (1996) to prevent analysis becoming a monstrous task and also to ensure that appropriate materials are being generated. For clarity, this section refers to the specific periods of time and activities used to transform my transcripts, fieldnotes and other material into ideas ready to be written about.

There is no single definition or method of qualitative data analysis, with variations between different perspectives and the context and needs of individual research projects (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). However Tesch (1990) usefully identifies several common features of approaches to analysis, including being systematic and comprehensive, but not rigid; cyclical, reflexive and flexible; breaking data down into meaningful units whilst maintaining the connection to the whole, through systems derived from the data itself (cited in Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 10). There is a "creative tension" in analysing qualitative data, between on the one hand processes of generalising, explaining and theorising, and on the other the ethnographic knowledge of real people and their actions (Davies, 1999: 193). The main aim of qualitative analysis is the "transform[ation] and interpret[ation of] qualitative data - in a rigorous and scholarly way - in order to capture the complexities of the social worlds we seek to understand" (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 3).

Qualitative research produces large amounts of (in this case predominantly textual) data which can be awkward to manage and explore (Bennett and Shurmer-Smith, 2002; Davies, 1999). Coding is a useful process that can facilitate the identification and exploration of themes and issues contained in and around the data, and can be conceptualised in two different ways (Coffey

and Atkinson, 1996). 'Data reduction' involves using codes to index data and as the basis for retrieving sections of data around a code, reducing the data to a number of general common denominators. 'Data complication', on the other hand, involves using codes to expand the data, to open it up and reconceptualise it and expand the dimensions of analysis. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest that in practice coding is generally a combination of both approaches. For this research I used a system of coding supported by the use of the software Atlas.ti. The next section introduces the approach to analysis through coding used here, with the following section describing the use of Atlas.ti to support this approach.

4.5.1 Coding

Codes are developed from a variety of sources which can be grouped into two main categories, 'emic' codes are the words and meanings used by the participants themselves and 'etic' codes are those imposed on the data by the researcher (Agar, 1980, cited in Cook and Crang, 1995: 82). Jackson (2001) suggests that these two different categories of codes represent two different levels of analysis, firstly identifying themes in participants' own words, before moving on to coding using theoretical concepts. This is similar to Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss (1987) ideas of grounded theory and open coding, whereby data is first examined from a theory neutral position (cited in Davies, 1999; Cook and Crang, 1995). This is however a somewhat naïve distinction, as it requires the researcher's interpretation of the data to identify even emic codes (Davies, 1999; Cook and Crang, 1995). Whilst the distinction between emic and etic codes is not complete, the idea of different levels of codes according to their 'closeness' to the data can be useful. Additionally, identifying different types of codes flags up the importance of considering the source of a code, allowing researchers to question whose world view is being used (Cook and Crang, 1995), and whether the codes are reinforcing existing power structures (Davies, 1999).

Cook and Crang (1995: 76-91) offer an unusually detailed and practical description of their approach to analysis using coding. Although they analysed their data using entirely paper-based systems, their stages of coding were used in this research supported by the use of Atlas.ti software, as discussed in the following section. Cook and Crang suggest treating transcripts and fieldnotes as primary materials, beginning the process of analysis by first returning to these materials to re-read them and understand them in the contexts in which they were produced. In order to 'reconstruct' the events and recognise the intersubjective nature of the materials, they suggest combining fieldnotes with transcripts rather than treating them as supplementary. Their first stage of analysis involves annotating the text by adding the intent or meaning of what is being said (more emic-style codes). These annotations should then be coded (becoming more etic-style codes) before creating a list of the codes identified. In order to develop these codes, Cook and Crang suggest defining and redefining what each code means, and compiling lists of ideas about, and connections between, these codes. These lists should be frequently revisited and reviewed to develop the links.

The next stage is to collate data around the codes. Cook and Crang regard these coded sections collected around themes as secondary materials. It is at this point that the focus shifts from individual 'stories' to the connections between them. The data under each code can be interrogated to see how they fit together or if they contradict each other. It is important throughout the process to return to the original transcripts to check the coding, and as Jackson (2001) suggests, go back to the original recordings to listen again for missed meaning. Contradictions may still remain after checking the coding, as they are part of social life and may be part of the theme being studied.

Cook and Crang's next stage is to explore the relationships between these collections of secondary materials, or what they term dimensions, to see for example whether some are sub-categories of the same dimension, or whether one requires sub-categories within it. Cook and Crang suggest drawing and redrawing maps and diagrams to explore the relationships between and within dimensions and to allow ideas to grow and change. They stress the

importance of maintaining paper trails, which form an explicit link from maps and dimensions back to the primary materials to not only aid analysis, but as evidence of reliability of the research. Although when put down on paper, this may seem like a unidirectional approach, Cook and Crang highlight the cyclical, iterative nature of their analysis, and warn against allowing the codes to reify themselves, by shuttling back and forth between the participants' and researcher's views.

4.5.2 Using Atlas.ti

Although Cook and Crang (1995) base their analysis strategy on using pens and paper, it was used in this research supported by the computer software package Atlas.ti⁵. The methodological implications of using software in qualitative data analysis, both positive and negative, are well documented and debated elsewhere (see for example Roberts and Wilson, 2002; Crang *et al*, 1997; Hinchliffe *et al*, 1997; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Coffey *et al*, 1996). Here the focus is on the implications for this research.

Although using software alters the physical process of coding, there is no conceptual difference between coding using software and using pens and paper (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). The software does not do the analysis, but provides a tool to support the researcher in carrying out the analysis (Roberts and Wilson, 2002). A key concern about the use of software is that it will encourage qualitative data to be analysed quantitatively, however this is not a necessary outcome of using software (Barry, 1998) and was not the approach used here. Using software to code and retrieve data can be quicker and more efficient than paper based data analysis (Bennett and Shurmer-Smith, 2002; Davies, 1999). However, the potential for efficiency and order that is offered by these packages is only achieved by applying them in a systematic and rigorous way (Crang *et al*, 1997). The results achieved using software are only as good as the work put in by the researcher. With a

⁵ Atlas.ti version 5.0 was used throughout this research (Muhr, 2004).

growing pile of interview transcripts, I decided that using software would be a useful way of approaching this analysis.

The decision to choose Atlas.ti as opposed to other similar packages was based on the advice of others that had used the package and the availability of training and expertise at the university, as is often the case for other researchers (Crang *et al*, 1997). Being new to using this type of software and concerned not to let the possibilities of the software lead my use of it (Barry, 1998), I intentionally limited my use of Atlas.ti to the code and retrieve functions and combined it with some paper-based analysis.

Interview transcripts are placed within what the software terms a 'hermeneutic unit', similar to a folder. The transcripts are displayed on screen and segments of text can be highlighted and codes attached. In Atlas.ti codes can be created either by first creating a list of codes and attaching them to selected segments of text, or 'free coding', selecting the text and creating a code to label it (Muhr, 2004). Using Cook and Crang's (1995) approach outlined above, on my first run through the transcripts I focussed mainly on free coding using the words and meanings from the transcripts, whilst also adding in codes for concepts that I had already identified during interviews or in subsequent readings of the transcripts. The codes are shown along the margin of the transcript and by clicking on the code the selected segment of text is highlighted within the transcript. A list of codes can be displayed on screen using what Atlas.ti calls the 'code manager', which displays the list of codes and the frequency with which they have been used. As each code was created, I produced a definition for the code, which was stored as a note in the code manager.

On the second run through the transcripts, which was saved as a separate version of the hermeneutic unit to allow the earlier version to be kept, I focussed on my interpretation of the codes created. The meaning of each code was examined, duplicate codes combined and codes that contained several concepts divided. Any alterations to the meaning of the code were added to the notes in the code manager. Roberts and Wilson (2002) suggest

that using software in qualitative data analysis creates a disruptive and artificial distance between selected segments of data and the context of the whole transcript. Although this can be problematic, Atlas.ti has the ability to display the instances of data assigned to a code, alongside the data highlighted within its original transcript (Muhr, 2004). This allows the researcher to move quickly between coded data within several transcripts.

Inevitably, as new concepts became clear, it was necessary to go back through the earlier transcripts to see whether they also featured there. At each stage when a large amount of analysis had been done a new version of the hermeneutic unit was saved and labelled. Atlas.ti offers several functions to label sections of text or whole transcripts with 'memos', notes created by the researcher for storing ideas or reminders about the data (Muhr, 2004). As I was still learning how to use this software and did not want to be led by the functions available (Barry, 1998), I focussed on using the simple functions of coding and labelling the coding, and kept other notes to myself in my research diary.

With the codes defined and refined I began to map and explore the relationships between them, for which I returned to pens and paper. Atlas.ti does offer functions for mapping and linking codes (Muhr, 2004), however I found that by using pens and paper I could see both the map of codes and also the coded transcripts at the same time without changing between screens. It was at this stage that I started to use the division between the three spaces of fishing - the sea, household and community - and so each code was given a prefix denoting which domain they fell into.

It can be difficult to know when to stop coding and begin writing, which forms the next stage of analysis. With the spaces of fishing forming three clear areas of analysis which lent themselves to individual chapters I began to work on each one in turn. I printed out the data assigned to each code for the chapter, which created a somewhat disjointed selection of data as described by Roberts and Wilson (2002). It was at this stage that Atlas.ti was most useful, as each segment of data could be quickly relocated within its original

transcript, which actually increased my 'closeness' to the data (Lewins and Silver, 2005). The codes were mapped again to create the structure for each chapter and while writing about sections of data I kept returning to transcripts, and at times the original sound recordings, to ensure the meaning of the participant was being accurately represented.

In summary I could have been more adventurous in my use of the many functions of Atlas.ti and, for example, not relied on paper methods for mapping codes. However, I was using this software for a specific purpose, to support the coding process, and not to make use of all the functions available. The process of coding was not so very different from working on paper, and the software did not reduce the time spent reading and re-reading transcripts which can be a key part of the process of analysing the data. However Atlas.ti proved most useful in locating and retrieving all instances of coded data quickly.

4.6 Producing a thesis

In keeping with the methodological approach described above, I have tried to carry out this research in a way that places priority on the voices and perspectives of the participants involved whilst acknowledging my role in the process (Collins, 1998; England, 1994; McDowell, 1992). However, the responsibility for analysis and writing remains mine alone (England, 1994). In order to allow the words of the people involved in this research to in some ways speak for themselves, I have intentionally included sections of transcripts wherever possible or "written in voices" (Opie, 1992: 59). This is of course not a complete solution, but combined with honesty and reflexivity can reduce misrepresentation and appropriation of participants' words (Bennett and Shurmer-Smith, 2002; England, 1994; Opie, 1992). When transcribing interviews I recorded all the natural disruptions to speech, the 'erms' and 'ahs', pauses and repetitions, as well as the exact phrasing and words used by participants. Much of this helps to illustrate the pace of conversation and the emotion and meaning being conveyed. However, some of this has been

removed to create a text that flows more smoothly. All instances where I have altered the original transcript are denoted with square brackets.

Ethical issues have greatly shaped this whole piece of research, not least in writing about the information entrusted to me by the participants. Although research methods textbooks offer advice on ethical issues, it is ultimately up to the individual to decide what they feel is appropriate (Bennett, 2000). During my Masters it was suggested that I might place this research on a fictional stretch of coast in order to fully protect the anonymity of those involved. This presented a dilemma: to write about people in a fictional setting where more detail could be used, or to maintain the real location and have to leave out or blur some aspects. At the time I decided to keep the research placed in northeast Scotland, and throughout the research process I have kept all promises of anonymity and written only what I feel comfortable other people reading (Shurmer-Smith, 2002). This does mean that some issues have been left out, and many personal details have been blurred, including at the most basic level changing all names. However, each decision has been carefully thought through using my professional judgement in order to avoid misrepresentation and maintain the vital connections to the real people who participated in this research. I believe that too much of the identities of the people I spoke with are tied up in the spaces and places where they live and work to create another world to situate them in. These people and places are introduced in the following chapter.

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5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the places and households that are the focus of this research, providing context for the main data and analysis chapters that follow. A brief description of the settlements where data was generated is presented to provide background to the places that are so central to people's sense of identity. For each place, the households that took part in the research are introduced, providing some of the history of how they came to be

in the position that they were in at the time of interviews. Issues of anonymity entail the blurring of some specific details. However, care has been taken to manipulate some of the specifics to maintain the coherent whole of people's lives. A summary of key sample details follows these individual narratives. As discussed in the methodology chapter, using gatekeepers and a snowballing approach to sampling presented methodological challenges. However the characteristics of the people that were suggested also gave some insight into the nature of the fishing industry and how they wished it to be portrayed. The chapter concludes by returning to the three domains of activity where fishing identities are constructed and performed, which forms the structure for the main body of data presented in the following three chapters.

5.2 Introduction to places and households

This section provides a descriptive introduction to each of the places which feature in this research to add to the economic and demographic information provided in Chapter 3. This, alongside an introduction to each of the households, builds a picture and context for the data generated.

5.2.1 Fraserburgh

Fraserburgh, or the Broch as it is often called locally, is the furthest east and most fishing dependent place in this research. Coming in from the east, past the main beach and leisure centre, the industrial estates soon appear on either side of the main road. Here light industry such as mechanics, electronic engineers and small-scale manufacturers operate alongside businesses connected to the fishing industry, such as fish and shellfish processing and net manufacturers. The main road continues down towards the harbour. The first building is one of the long, low, refrigerated fish markets which are a hive of buying and selling activity six days a week, although you have to be up early to see this as it is usually over by 9am. Behind the fish market are the first two of eight basins, where the majority of whitefish and

prawn boats are moored. A major shipyard operates beyond these basins and there are frequently two or three boats up on the slips being repaired. Fraserburgh has three ice factories at the harbour and their tall structures with long hoses used to transfer the ice onto the boats are located on the edge of the main basins.

Plate 5.1 Demersal trawlers at the ice factory, Fraserburgh



Source: Author, 2004

The smaller inshore fleet is based in the central basins, where the large resident seals can be seen splashing around waiting for scraps thrown overboard. The car park that runs along the edge of these basins is frequently full, with men working on these smaller boats or waiting to leave to sea on a trip or head home having just come back. The quays are often occupied by men unloading nets and making repairs. The final two basins are used by the massive boats from the pelagic fleet. At this end of the harbour is a largely derelict industrial area, with large work sheds that had previously serviced the fishing industry and are now in the process of being demolished.

Plate 5.2 Pelagic vessels, Fraserburgh



Source: Author, 2005

Across the main road from the harbour is a row of businesses and pubs that service the fishing industry, including several fish selling offices, safety equipment providers and maritime insurance and accountants. Behind this row of buildings is the main shopping street, which is made up of several charity and discount shops alongside a newsagent, chemist, shoe shop and supermarket. With several empty shops, the main street looks tired and run down despite several sculptures reflecting the themes of the sea and fishing. Behind this commercial area are the main residential estates, which are a mixture of modern and traditional and appear to be in varying states of repair and levels of prosperity. Travelling along the main road leaving Fraserburgh another collection of industrial units line one side of the road, again servicing the fishing industry through processing. The town is surrounded by the gently rolling hills of the Aberdeenshire landscape that is predominantly arable agricultural land. Although Fraserburgh has a Lighthouse and Fishing Museum, it is not often visited as a tourist destination.

Jamie and Beth

Jamie and Beth are originally from two of the small fishing villages on the outskirts of Fraserburgh. They are both from long lines of fishing families:

“As far back as we can trace for generations we’ve all been fishermen, my father’s father, my father, myself, my son as well, he’s into fishing, so we’ve been generations. We originally came from [a nearby village], but we’ve been fishing out of Fraserburgh, well my father’s father, he was based in Fraserburgh, for fishing. My wife’s side is all fishing, it’s all fishing families, it’s always been fishing. How many years I wouldnae like to say!”

Jamie left school at 14 with the intention of going to the sea. However, his father would not let him aboard his boat until he had acquired suitable skills and so he spent two years working at a local net factory. At 16 Jamie joined his three brothers aboard his father’s boat and worked his way up the share system⁶. He bought his first boat second-hand at 23, and has since had a new boat built for him. His brothers all went onto their own boats, and they were well known and respected locally for having four boats in the family.

Jamie and Beth met through fishing, with Jamie working for a friend of Beth’s father. They married at 18 and are now in their early 50s. For most of her married life Beth concentrated on running the household and bringing up their children. Since the children have left home she has begun to work part-time in a local shop. They have four children, a daughter studying at university, a daughter who is married to a local fisherman who works on Jamie’s boat, a son who is in the RAF and their eldest son who is also onboard the family

⁶ The share system that is common within the fishing industry means that the earnings of the skipper and crew are determined by the value of the catch landed each trip, rather than a set wage. Once the fish has been sold a share of the value of the catch is set aside for ‘the boat’, to cover the expenses from the trip and the running costs of the business. The remainder is shared out among the skipper and crew as payment for working the trip. The percentage given to each fisherman is dependent on the work they contribute. So for example, a man who is just starting out in the industry might receive a half share (half the equivalent of a fully trained and experienced crewman) moving up to a three quarter, then a full share once deemed competent by the skipper to do the work of everyone else.

boat. Jamie intends to stay in the industry for a few more years until his son is ready to take on the boat.

Brian and Nicola

Brian and Nicola are both in their late 30s and are also from local fishing families. They have three young children. Nicola works from home as a child-minder. From the age of 12, Brian spent holidays out fishing with his father and became set on becoming a fisherman. He began his fishing career straight after leaving school at 16, despite being warned against it:

“I was told not to go into the fishing but I wouldn’t listen, it was just what I wanted to do.” *“Who told you not to?”* “My dad, just because it wasn’t much of a life, because you’re away a long time and you miss weekends and it’s not really a good lifestyle, but I had better ideas!”

Starting on the family boat on a half share, Brian worked his way up to full share before working on a variety of local boats. When he was 30 he bought his own boat and has since been mainly trawling in the Norwegian sector. At the time of the interview in summer 2003 he had just been notified that he had been offered decommissioning and had decided to accept.

Alan and Katherine

Alan and Katherine are both from Fraserburgh. Alan comes from a fishing family, with his father and uncles all at sea. Despite losing his father in a fishing accident, Alan went straight into fishing on leaving school and worked his way up to a full share on one of his uncle’s boats. Katherine’s parents were not involved with fishing, but her brother spent some time working on a local boat before leaving to work in the oil industry. They are in their mid-30s and have three young daughters and a son. Alan bought into his first boat at 21 and replaced it with a new-build in 1996. At the time of our interview in summer 2003 they had just been accepted for decommissioning and were in the process of deciding their future.

John

John was born in Macduff into a fishing family. He left school at 16 and went straight onto his father's boat with his brother-in-law. Having worked his way up to full share, he moved to Fraserburgh and began working on another local boat. His father retired when John was in his late 20s and so he took on the family boat. Since then he has had two new boats and is now in his late 40s. John is divorced and has three children, two daughters who are living locally with their own families, and a son who is studying engineering at university. John has invested heavily in his new boat and extra quota that he has bought and is determined to stay in the industry.

Katrina and Matthew

Katrina is originally from the south west of Scotland, and moved to Fraserburgh in her late teens, where she met her husband Matthew. They are both in their early 40s and have three teenage children. Matthew is from a local fishing family and went to sea from school on his father's boat. After a few trips on the family boat, his father suggested that Matthew go to college to learn a trade that could be a safety net should fishing not work out for him. He trained as an electrician, but soon returned to the sea. Approximately 10 years ago the boat he was working on suffered a run of bad luck and low prices and so Adam returned to work on-shore. Again he was lured back to fishing and has been working on a friend's boat as engineer for the last eight years. Katrina works full-time as a self-employed hairdresser.

Joyce and Ben

Joyce is from Elgin, the large town near Lossiemouth. She met Ben and moved to Fraserburgh when they married 20 years ago; they are now in their early 40s. Ben came from a local fishing family, leaving school at 15 to work on his father's boat. Having worked his way up to full share he bought into his first boat at 22, and after several successful years working the whitefish sector now owns two vessels. They have 5 children, two sons and three daughters, all under 16.

5.2.2 Macduff

Travelling west from Fraserburgh along the dramatic rocky coastline, past the small former fishing villages of Crovie and Pennan that are now tourist destinations, you arrive at Macduff. Coming in to the town past the golf course and some light industrial units, the main road drops down the hill toward the harbour. Here there are several large sheds belonging to the shipyards, where there are frequently a collection of fishing boats up on supports for repairs and maintenance. The fish market operates only when there is adequate demand, but boats can sometimes be seen landing directly to processors' lorries. At the west end of the harbour the landscape is dominated by the massive shed of Macduff Shipyards, who build and repair steel and wooden hulled boats.

Plate 5.3 Macduff Shipyards, Macduff



Source: Author, 2004

Looking back at the town from the harbour, the church is the most visible landmark, perched high above the harbour on the edge of the cliff. The town

is made up of a mixture of modern and traditional housing, with a small range of local shops. Macduff's main tourism attraction is the aquarium which is a favourite for local school trips and visitors. The town sits next to the more picturesque town of Banff, divided only by the river Deveron. Banff is more tourism-focussed, with a historic house, golf course and a selection of small cafés and gift shops.

Plate 5.4 Macduff church from the harbour, Macduff



Source: Author, 2006

Arthur and Jeanette

Arthur is from three generations of Macduff fishermen. Arthur had always wanted to go to sea, and went straight onto his father's boat at 15. He had spent much of his school holidays (and term-time) at sea before then. Arthur spent the first 10 years of his fishing career working with his father, before getting the opportunity to buy into and skipper a new boat being built at Macduff Shipyards. He was with that boat for a further eight years, until he left to have his own boat built 10 years ago. Arthur married Jeanette, also

from Macduff and they are now in their early 40s. Jeanette is the daughter of a local net maker. She has concentrated on running the household since she married, and they have three children in their late teens. At the time of our interview Arthur was unsure about the future of the industry, but hoping to stay in it until retirement.

5.2.3 Cullen

The village of Cullen, original home of the famous fish dish 'Cullen Skink', is divided into two distinct areas. Up on the cliff top, 'up the brae', is the main part of the village, with the shops, church, school and main residential areas. The centre is made up of traditional stone town houses and smaller cottages with more modern estates developed on the outskirts. Most of the businesses in Cullen are located on the main street that runs through the centre of the village. Most of the shops are independent specialist shops directed at visitors, especially the tourists who visit Cullen through the summer. These are based on art and crafts, books, antiques, home-made ice cream and sweets and an award-winning fish and chip shop. Cullen also has a chemist, Post Office, newsagent, small supermarket and several pubs which provide services for residents and tourists alike. The village is surrounded by agricultural land used mainly for arable and pig production.

The main part of Cullen looks down over the harbour and the second section of the village, the seatown. Here more than 100 small stone cottages and rows of terraced houses are crammed into the space between the bottom of the cliff and the harbour. They were originally built to house the fisherfolk of Cullen, in a crowded uncoordinated manner. There is no distinct street plan, with the houses numbered in the order in which they were built. They are small, low buildings, where the roof-space would have been used by fishing families as net stores. Most of the houses are built with the gable end facing the sea to provide protection from the winter storms. These cottages are all now converted for modern family life, with the net lofts now attic bedrooms and many are used as second homes, or let to holiday makers.

Plate 5.5 Seatown, Cullen



Source: Author, 2001

The harbour is no longer used for commercial fishing, instead several small pleasure craft are moored there. Next to the seatown is the golf course, a key feature of many of these coastal settlements and the long stretch of Cullen beach, empty in the winter aside from a few hardy dog-walkers, but a favourite for family picnics in the summer. Looking back up to Cullen from the beach the view is dominated by the massive arches of the viaduct where the coastal rail route once ran.

Peter and Kate

Peter and Kate are in their late 40s and have lived in Cullen all their lives. They are both from local fishing families and grew up surrounded by the industry, with their fathers, uncles and brothers all going to the sea. They married 25 years ago and have two children. Peter left school at 16 and went straight onto his father's boat where he worked his way up the share system and became skipper of his first boat at 25. Kate trained at college to be a hairdresser and is now self-employed since taking a career-break while their

children were young. One of their sons, who is 25, has left home and works for an engineering firm in Aberdeen, the other who is 21 left school at 16 to join his father on the family boat and lives at home with his parents. Peter and Kate's story is used in the first section of the following chapter to introduce the work world of being a fisherman.

Jill and Roy

Jill is from a Cullen fishing family, with her grandfather, uncles, father and brother all fishermen. Her husband Roy came from a farming background. They are both in their early 50s and have three children in their 20s. Roy first went to sea at 21 on Jill's father's boat having served his time in a local net making business. After working with Jill's father, Roy and Jill's brother bought their own boat which they worked for 12 years and then replaced it with a new boat. Their second new-build boat was launched in 1995. In 2003 they decided the business was no longer viable and sold the boat. When I interviewed Jill in 2004, Roy had been working as mate on a friend's boat, and intended to stay fishing until retirement. Roy and Jill's son had also been working on the family boat for several years, and has now gone to the oil industry. We return to Jill and Roy at the beginning of Chapter 8 where their story provides context for the exploration of fishing within households.

5.2.4 Portknockie

Moving along the coast from Cullen, the next village is Portknockie which is built almost entirely up on the cliff top. This village is made up of a main street and small square that contains the grocery shop, newsagent and Post Office, along with the local pub. This centre is surrounded by traditional stone cottages and houses, many of which were built for fisher families and, as in Cullen, had net lofts in the roof. Around the outskirts of the village are more modern developments of larger houses and bungalows.

The town looks down onto the rocky cliffs, harbour and now redundant tidal swimming pool. Although no longer used by the commercial fishing industry the harbour is often used by small pleasure craft. The village is well presented, and has several fishing-themed flower displays along the main road. The signage for the village highlights its status as a 'historic fishing village'.

Plate 5.6 Portknockie village sign, Portknockie



Source: Author, 2004

The neighbouring village of Findochty is perhaps more popular for pleasure craft and visitors and the marina here has been developed to attract these customers. The brightly coloured houses, traditionally painted using left-overs from painting the family boat, face onto the immaculately kept marina next to a popular caravan park.

Plate 5.7 Painted fisher houses, Findochty



Source: Author, 2005

Adam and Josie

Adam and Josie are both from Portknockie and are in their late 30s. They have three sons in their late teens and early 20s. Adam's family ran a shop in the village; his introduction to fishing was through an uncle who would take him fishing during school holidays. Josie's father and two brothers were at sea together. When they married Adam joined Josie's father's boat. Since then Adam has skippered two of his own boats, with one of their sons joining him on the boat. When I first interviewed Adam in 2003 he was hopeful for the future of the industry and the role he and his sons could play in it. When I returned in 2005 this positive attitude had been shaken somewhat as they had lost the boat through an accident. However, both Adam and his son were determined to stay in the industry and were assessing their options for replacing the boat.

5.2.5 Buckie

Like most of the other settlements along this coast, Buckie is built around its harbour. Up on the cliff on the inland side of the town are the industrial estates, which include a soft drinks factory and a large maltings. Next come the main residential areas which include large modern estates built around the older parts of the town's housing. The three main shopping streets radiate out from a central square. Here there are a wide variety of local shops, including hairdressers, bakeries and an ironmonger, alongside small branches of national retail chains such as the Co-op, WH Smiths and the clothes store Mackays.

Looking down from the main part of the town the harbour is surrounded by other smaller areas of housing. To the east the satellite village of Portessie joins onto Buckie. Next to this are the smaller areas of Ianstown and Johnstown. To the west of the harbour is the former fishertown of Yardie which, similar to Cullen's seatown, is a collection of small cottages crammed into the space between the bottom of the cliff and the sea.

Plate 5.8 Fishing fleet in for Christmas, Buckie



Source: Author, 1999

At the east end of the harbour are the large sheds of Buckie shipyards where boats are maintained and repaired. This company no longer relies solely on the fishing industry and has won a lucrative contract to maintain Scotland's Lifeboats. This has allowed the shipyard to expand and construct a further

workshed on the town side of the harbour road, along with a massive sling to transport the lifeboats out of the harbour. Next to the shipyard are the main basins of the harbour. Apart from Christmas time when the fleet are at home, there are usually only a couple of fishing boats in the harbour. However, Buckie is also used for cargo and so grain and timber is frequently loaded onto large industrial boats from the west end of the harbour. This is also where the fish market is. It was recently refurbished, but is no longer an active market, used instead for storage of cargo.

Plate 5.9 Nets drying behind an empty harbour, Buckie



Source: Author, 2005

The row of buildings facing the harbour contains a small collection of fish selling offices, safety gear suppliers and other ancillary services. There is also a large area of open space used for drying nets. Behind the main row of fishing services is a large modern building which housed 'The Buckie Drifter', a local authority-sponsored tourist attraction that charted the history of Buckie's fishing industry and boats. However, the Drifter came into financial

difficulties and had to close. Buckie is not a tourist-focussed town, although several businesses operate pleasure cruises from the harbour offering wildlife tours along the coast and trips to see the Moray Firth dolphins.

Jack

Jack, who in his early 30s, was the youngest fisherman to take part in this research. He comes from a long line of Buckie fishermen. As he states:

“I’ve always lived in Buckie, my father comes from a strong fishing background, his father was a fisherman, his father’s father was a fisherman, I think about 5, I can trace it back to about 5 generations.”

After leaving school and spending time working at the local net factory, he worked on several family and local boats before buying into a second hand boat of his own. In 1999 Jack and his brother commissioned a new boat which they had been working intensively to make the repayments. At the time of the interview in 2004, he had begun to think about shifting his focus from intensive fishing to settling into family life.

George and Patricia

George, in his early 60s and from Buckie, had fished from leaving school at 15 to retirement at 55, with just two years out serving an apprenticeship at the local shipyard. After working with his father, he bought into a boat with his brother and they went on to own two more boats. His wife Patricia is also from a local fishing family. They have three sons and a daughter, two of their sons and their son-in-law also joined the fishing industry. One son has moved to another local boat, the other and their son-in-law took over the family boat when George retired. George remains involved in the running of the boat and is politically active within the industry.

Paul and Sarah

Paul originally comes from Fraserburgh, moving to Buckie when he married Sarah. They are now in their late 30s and have three teenage children. Paul's father, brothers and uncles all fished, and he went onto his father's boat at 16. At 19 he transferred to a local pelagic boat, before returning to the whitefish sector with his own boat which he had for 12 years. Sarah's family were also heavily involved with the fishing industry and owned several boats. She trained as a teacher once their children had started school. In 2002 Paul became increasingly uneasy about the future of the industry and sold his boat. Since then he has been working in the oil industry.

Bill and Rachel

Bill and Rachel, now in their late 50s, are both from long lines of Buckie fishing families, with Bill joining his father's boat after two years at college. Rachel ran the household and brought up their four daughters, who have all now left home. Having worked his way up to full share on his father's boat, Bill moved onto another local boat before setting out on his own with a new boat, with a second new boat ten years later. However, in 1999 he decided that he no longer had a future in the industry, sold his boat and joined the oil industry.

5.2.6 Lossiemouth

The seatown at Lossiemouth is located at the east end of the village, tucked in behind the sandy dunes and long beach that forms a large part of Lossiemouth's attraction for tourists and visitors. The main commercial area is next to the seatown and includes a small selection of local shops and cafés. Behind this commercial area are the main residential estates, the high school and a large supermarket. The main street of the town leads down to one of the basins of the harbour. Here there are several rows of large yachts and pleasure boats.

Plate 5.10 Pleasure boats at Lossiemouth marina, Lossiemouth



Source: Author, 2005

The buildings along the quays that were once used as storage for the fishing industry have been converted into luxury flats and a collection of maritime-themed gift shops and a café. Around a slight headland from this picturesque part of Lossiemouth and its harbour are two further basins which are used by small local fishing craft. Behind this section of the harbour are several small industrial sheds used by local garages and as storage.

Stuart and Lisa

Stuart has lived in Lossiemouth all his life, where he met his wife Lisa. They are in their late 30s and have two young daughters. Stuart once worked on a fishing boat at 17. He worked his way up the hierarchy on the boat and when the skipper retired Stuart took over. After a couple of years he was the opportunity to buy into another boat with a local fisherman, before setting off with his own second-hand boat. In 2000 he replaced this boat with another,

Plate 5.11 Harbour Tearooms in former fish warehouses, Lossiemouth



Source: Author, 2005

Leaving Lossiemouth along the coast road heading west takes you past a development of large luxury homes and a relatively exclusive golf club. A short distance along this road is a large Royal Air Force (RAF) base, which provides employment, but also regular disruption as jets roar overhead.

Stuart and Lisa

Stuart has lived in Lossiemouth all his life, where he met his wife Lisa. They are in their late 30s and have two young daughters. Stuart does not come from a fishing background and decided to go to sea when offered a position on a friend's boat at 17. He worked his way up the hierarchy on this boat and when the skipper retired Stuart took over. After a couple of years he got the opportunity to buy into another boat with a local fisherman, before setting off with his own second-hand boat. In 2000 he replaced this boat with another,

but after a run of bad luck with accidents and repairs and feeling squeezed out by the state of the industry, Stuart decommissioned his boat in 2002. He was working for an oil firm industry within a week and intends to stay in this industry.

Charlie and Edna

Charlie worked in the fishing industry from the age of 15 to retirement at 56; he is now approaching 70. He is from a Lossiemouth fishing family, as is his wife Edna; they have one daughter who is not connected to the industry. Charlie began his fishing career with his father and took over the family boat with his brother. They worked together until Charlie retired and the boat was sold. Despite leaving the sea, Charlie has remained active in the political side of the industry and through the local heritage centre.

James and Dot

James and his wife, Dot, in their late 60s, have also lived in Lossiemouth all their lives and come from fishing families. James went to sea with his father before taking over the boat himself. They have three sons who all went into the fishing industry and began on James' boat. One has since moved to his own boat, and the other two took over the family boat on James' retirement.

Mike and Sue

Mike is from Hopeman and moved to Lossiemouth when he married his wife Sue. They both come from fishing families, and are now in their late 40s. Mike went to sea with his father before working on several local boats. He returned to the family boat when his father retired. Since then he has had two new boats, with the most recent just four years old. Sue runs the household and brought up their two sons and daughter. One of their sons and their son-in-law work with Mike on the boat. With such a new boat that still has to be paid for, Mike is determined to stay in the industry with the long term goal of passing a boat on to his son and grandson.

5.2.7 Hopeman

Hopeman is the furthest west and smallest village featured in this research. Between the RAF base at Lossiemouth and the village of Hopeman are a golf course and several 'beauty spots' for walking along the coast. The main street in Hopeman contains a small collection of shops including a Post Office, grocers and newsagent. The small harbour is used by light pleasure craft and local inshore fishing boats. Next to the harbour is a modern children's play area and space to park cars for walks along the coast. The oldest stone houses are grouped around the harbour, with a more modern small housing estate built inland from this.

Richard and Laura

Richard and Laura are both from Lossiemouth, moving to Hopeman after they were married. Laura is from a fishing background, but Richard came to fishing after being offered a position on a local boat at 18. They are now in their early 40s and have two teenage children. Laura works part-time as a self-employed beautician. Richard worked on several local boats before achieving his aim of owning his own boat at 30. This boat was lost in an accident in 1999 and had to be replaced. After problems with the new boat and retaining crew, Richard decided to take a decommissioning offer in 2002. He has since started up his own business.

5.3 Sample overview

Of the 19 households that took part in this research, 12 were actively fishing with two of these considering decommissioning at the time of interviews. Three of the households had retired from the industry and four had either recently sold or decommissioned their boats. All the boats were targeting purely whitefish, or a combination of whitefish and prawns. Of the 19 households, all but one were headed by a fisherman who was at the time of the research, or had been in the past, skipper of his own boat. Only two

research participants were working as crew on other people's boats, although all had worked as crew before becoming skippers.

The crew of fishing boats can be seen as a somewhat 'forgotten' sector of the industry with little research focussing specifically on them. However, when assessing the contacts made as the research progressed and recognising the high proportion of skippers suggested, I decided to concentrate on this group. This concentration of skippers suggested to me highlights the central position they hold within the industry. Most, particularly the successful, are well respected and held in high esteem by others in the industry. When people were suggested to me for interview, it was often alongside a quick description of the fisherman, for example 'He's a good fisherman' or 'He's been really successful'.

From the crew households in this research and discussions with other participants it is clear that there are important differences and similarities between these skippers and crew. For example, there appears to be similar levels of commitment to and pride in the boat whether fishermen are skippers or crew on the boat, and both groups are financially dependent on its success. However, there is some level of 'separation' between crew and skippers, with the skippers of boats sometimes perceived as perhaps more financially secure than their crew, despite the risks associated with their greater financial stake in the boat. As highlighted in the next chapter, there are also differences in levels of responsibility and type of work to be done between these two groups. Further research would be required to understand these distinctions and their implications for identity more fully.

Several of the people suggested to me were local representatives of fishermen's organisations such as the Scottish Whitefish Producers Association or the Fishermen's Association Limited. During interviews participants often suggested I contact the national or regional representatives of these organisations. Although this research was not about the political complexities of the fishing industry, the people who worked in these organisations were seen by some as perhaps more able to express the

situation within the industry, and industry politics were high on the agenda of several participants.

All the people who took part in this research were aged 30 and above. The absence of younger participants can be partly explained by the high proportion of skippers interviewed, as it is usual for fishermen to take on their first boat as skipper in their late 20s or early 30s. However it may also reflect the ageing profile of the fisheries workforce (as will be discussed in Chapter 6). When discussing this with one of my gatekeepers she could not think of any younger fishermen for me to interview and explained this as due to the problem of recruiting young men to the industry. In the households where sons are employed on the boat I attempted to set up interviews with them. However, it turned out to be impossible to find times to interview them, as they spent little time onshore. It is quite common for fishermen to work particularly intensively during their 20s and early 30s which enables them to slow down a little into their 40s and 50s.

Almost all of the participants in this research were from local families and had grown up along this stretch of coast. A sense of being local and having knowledge of the history and culture of the coastal strip was expressed by participants during interviews and seen by them as important to being part of these places. This is neatly expressed by a phrase used in the area. Instead of saying 'I am from Portknockie' people can be heard saying "I belong to Portknockie". Just two participants, both women, were not from these coastal villages. One originally came from Elgin, the large inland town near to Lossiemouth, and the other had moved to the area from the south west of Scotland. The two women who came "from away" spoke of working to "adapt to" and "adopt" these places as home, to become part of them.

Whether through the husband or wife, all the households had some connection to the industry in their family trees. In some families, fishing went back generations with fathers, grandfathers, uncles and brothers all going to sea. In just a few cases the connections were not as strong, with for example an uncle working as a fish merchant, or a man marrying into a fishing family.

Those men who grew up within a fishing family often spent much of their school holidays out on family-owned boats. It was common for these men to have left school between the ages of 14 and 16 and gone either to an apprenticeship, or straight onto a boat to work their way up the share system. Sons of fishermen were often encouraged to take on an apprenticeship when times were hard within the industry. This would provide them with a trade to fall back on should incomes in the catching sector fall. These were usually with local businesses and directly linked to the fishing industry, such as with the shipyards or net factories.

Most of the fishermen in this research had worked their way up through the share system and then gone on to fisheries college to study toward their 'skipper's ticket', the qualification needed to take charge of a fishing boat. Many of them either took on the family boat in their late 20s, or invested in their own boat along with other business partners which often included family members. Most of the boats were, or had been, understood by participants as family businesses and a sense of continuity and inheritance was valued by them. A long term relationship between crew and the boat was also valued and the opportunity to have the next generation of the family on the boat was prized. However, as will be seen in Chapter 6, changes in the industry are threatening this sense of continuity. Most fishermen retire in their mid 50s, by which point sons or sons-in-law on the boat are at the stage in their fishing careers when they would be considering taking on the boat.

As previously mentioned, the women who took part in this research were also generally local with family connections to the industry. They were employed in a variety of jobs including receptionists, teachers, shop assistants and hair dressers. Due to their responsibility for childcare while their husbands were at sea, most took career-breaks while their children were young. Although not directly employed in the industry, they contribute to it immensely, as will be seen in Chapter 7.

The households were at different stages in their lives, which influenced their outlook and perspective on the industry. Those who had retired, three

households in this research, had gained some level of distance from direct involvement in the industry and had time and space to reflect upon their life and work. Four of the fishermen have a son or son-in-law working with them on the family boat. Their understanding of the industry and their place within it, are tied in with their hopes for their children and the continuation of the family business. Households with children under the age of 18 and not yet set on a career path were at a particular point of uncertainty and decision-making. These seven households were in the process of deciding whether to support or encourage their children into the industry, or to steer them away from it. This decision would determine the future of the family business. These fishermen, aged between 30 and 50, also had to decide their own future; whether to stay in the industry until retirement, or to leave at a point where they felt they would still have a chance of a successful career change.

The individual narratives of the households, introduced in section 5.2 above, highlight the unique situations the participants in this research were in. Their individual histories and biographies undoubtedly inform their understandings of the industry and their identities. However, as has been highlighted in this section, there are also many shared characteristics between the households, such as their local and fishing based histories, which contribute to the collective sense of fishing identity.

5.4 Three domains of fishing

The three domains of fishing: the sea, household and community, are used to analyse and present the data generated in this research. This framework was designed to provide a methodical way through the analysis of the large amounts of rich data generated through this research. It was also intended to provide the structure for presenting this data in a way that could combine the varied stories of individual households without losing the narrative of the patterns of fishing that were present in all the households. The framework was developed from the data and the descriptions people gave of the patterns of their lives. It is based around the fishermen and the spaces which they

create through their work. Each domain is a physical space that is given meaning through the work of fishing. A description of these three domains is presented below.

The domain of the sea is the work world of fishermen. It is the space where skippers and their crew take their boats out and work intensively for a week or more, to generate the income that supports this industry. It is the main site of learning and performance of fishermen's identity in terms of their technical skills and competencies. It is tied up with the relationships between fishermen within a crew and what it means to be successful as a fisherman. It is an almost exclusively male domain based around men and their boats, as there are very few women involved in the catching sector or, according to local superstition, even allowed to step foot on a fishing boat. The sea is also the main site of fishermen's interaction with policy, which is focussed on managing the processes of catching fish. At sea they are not only under surveillance by the Fisheries Protection Authority, but also by other skippers who are monitoring the competition to achieve the largest and highest value catch. The relationship between fishermen at sea is not solely about competition. Friendships between individuals are maintained through communications at sea and these social networks extend beyond the communities of place on shore. However, it is also a strangely private world, a world that those outside the industry, or even those who are not fishermen including wives and families, have little direct experience or comprehension of.

The second domain, the household, is both structured by the work worlds of fishermen, and enables fishermen to work. It is the base of the fishing industry, where fishermen go to sea from and return home to. The household is where the family business is run from and where other members of the family labour to enable the boat to go to sea. This work is both direct physical work, in terms of running errands, doing accounts or washing fishermen's clothes and less direct work, running the household and caring for the children while the fisherman is away. Running the household is a source of tension for women, who must be independent and capable while their husband is at sea,

but maintain space and a role for him for when he returns. The household is also a site of learning and socialisation for the next generation of fishermen and fishermen's wives. It is here in the household that a fisherman and the family business will create, or not, a successor. This domain is not exclusively female, but is the site where women make their most important contributions to, and draw identities from, the fishing industry. The household is the private world of fishing, where the individual performances of identity and negotiations between husband and wife, and their children, occur.

The third domain is the public world of fishing, the community. This domain encapsulates the onshore impacts and results of the fishing industry - the economic and social structures. The community is the barometer for the success or otherwise of the local fishing industry. This is the public, most visible world of fishing, where fishing identities are performed to, and with, other fishing people and to outsiders who are not part of the 'fishing community'. The idea of the 'fishing community' and the components that constitute it are a collective history and memory that is part of the cultural repertoire that comes with being part of the collective fishing identity.

The division between the three domains is an analytical construct to aide the analysis and presentation of the vast body of data generated in this research. Although it was developed from the data itself and from exploring the life and work of fishermen and their families, the division between the three domains is not as distinct in people's lives as it is presented here. For example, when fishermen return to harbour to unload and sell their catch, they are still within the domain of the sea and performing their work identity as fishermen. However, they are also within and creating the domain of the community, by creating an active harbour and signifying the place as a 'fishing community'. Even with this slight blurring between domains, the framework is a useful tool for making sense of the data and unpicking issues of identity and is used to structure the following three chapters.

6 The Sea

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6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the ways in which fishing identities are constructed and performed in the work worlds of fishermen, out at sea. As introduced in the previous chapter, the domain of the sea embraces both the work and social organisation of fishing. It is in some respects the public world of the fishing industry, where fishermen operate as teams of crew, monitored by and monitoring other boats, and interacting with and under the surveillance of policy. However it is also largely private, in that it goes unseen by and is hidden from those outside the industry. This chapter begins by illustrating the nature of work for fishermen and what it means to be a fisherman. The chapter then moves on to address two key areas of change as highlighted by the participants of this research – the increase in rules and regulations, which has brought with it a perceived criminalisation of fishermen, and issues associated with the breakdown of traditional crew relationships. These changes have not only had practical impacts on the work of fishing, but they have also impacted upon the meaning of fishing and the identities that are

constructed around it. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of leaving the industry for an individual's sense of identity.

6.2 The work worlds of fishermen

The following vignette of one household that took part in this research is designed to illustrate the work world and practical aspects of what it means to be a fisherman. I asked several fishermen to take me through 'an average fishing trip', usually as part of second interviews. My request was typically met with laughter and some confusion as there is no such thing as an average trip. Part of the excitement (and sometimes stressfulness) of being a fisherman is that no two hauls of the nets, let alone trips, are the same. This is an important part of being a fisherman, working in an environment that is constantly changing and being prepared and able to deal with the unexpected. Fishermen construct themselves as adaptable and able to cope with any situation thrown at them while at sea. However, having explained that I wanted to hear about what fishermen do when they are out at sea, as this is a largely private world I had not had access to, I was privy to rich descriptions of their work. Although the work of fishing is rarely seen by fishermen as mundane, it is almost implicitly understood by those involved in the industry and explaining the detail of daily activities was seen as an unusual task by those who took part in interviews. Talking through what fishermen physically do at sea gives insight into the operation and mobilisation of fishing identity through their work.

6.2.1 Peter and Kate's story

As introduced in the previous chapter, Peter and Kate are in their late 40s and have lived in Cullen all their lives. They are both from local fishing families and have two children. Peter left school at 16 and went straight onto his father's boat where he worked his way up the share system and became skipper of his first boat when he was 25. Kate trained at college to be a

hairdresser and is now self-employed since taking a break while their children were young. One of their sons, who is 25, has left home and works for an engineering firm in Aberdeen, the other who is 21 left school at 16 to join his father on the family boat and lives with Peter and Kate.

Peter and his crew trawl for whitefish and prawns, working mainly from Fraserburgh. They work six or seven day trips, and the boat is usually in harbour for at least 24 hours between trips. Like many other boats in this area, they work a rota system whereby the boat employs six men (including Peter) but only four go to sea for each trip. This means that the skipper and each crew member work two trips on and one off, equating to approximately 16 days a month including time spent working on the boat whilst it is in harbour. Each crew member receives full pay for the trips they work the boat and half for the trip they are at home. This means that the boat can be worked relatively intensively while maintaining a better quality of life for the men. Peter and Kate consider themselves fortunate that they have always had a steady reliable crew, most of whom come from the nearby villages and includes one of their sons.

The boat begins the trip in Fraserburgh, visibly present in the harbour, where repairs are done to the gear and stores are bought from local shops and loaded up for the trip ahead. The maintenance work on the gear continues as the boat steams towards the fishing grounds, as Peter explains:

“Well, say we were going out on a Monday, if there’s any work to be done, gear maintenance to be done, tweaking up of gear, you do that in harbour. You obviously can’t do too much aboard ship. Your trawl doors for example, that keep the nets open, you’re speaking about 600, 700 kilos each, so you need the actual crane onboard ship just to shift them. And you can imagine it’s like a pendulum and you can’t actually do that with the ship rolling right? And you’ve gotten a half tonne of weight and it’s like a clock pendulum, you ken? It’d just be like a battering ram, you ken? So all that kind of thing has to be done before you go. But what

you can do, what we usually do is leave the chains, the adjustments on the doors, tweaking up chains and anything to do with the nets, you can actually do the nets onboard the ship. Er anything to fine tune the nets or any maintenance that's left to be done on the nets can be done on the way out to the fishing grounds. Then when that's done, more or less the guys just go to bed. If you're off watch you go to bed, or watch the telly or a DVD or read the papers. What we have now, we have Sky onboard ship now you see, so it's kinda home from home. You watch the football til you get out to the fishing grounds, you ken?"

Fishermen construct themselves as skilled in efficient time and task management, which allows them the opportunity to maximise their incomes whilst ensuring the boat and crew are not taking unnecessary risks. Once the initial work on the gear is complete, the fishermen off watch get some time to themselves. However once they reach the fishing grounds the intensive patterns of the work of fishing take over and everything is focussed on the boat, the nets and each catch.

"It depends where you're going, but roughly, where we're at just now it's about 15, 16, 17 hours, ken the best part of a day, to get there. And once you start fishing that's you, more or less, your leisure time is very few. Because you're towing the gear for four, five hours, [then] you're hauling, it's taking maybe two, three hours to clear up the fish, so perhaps you're getting maybe just two hours to sleep. So after you're out for a few days you get tired, fatigue starts wearing in. Instead a sitting watching the football match your head's down, because you're going to be up on deck again in two, three hours. So basically it's a case a up and down, the gear's shot, towed, up, fish processed, get your meals and down to bed quickly, quickly as possible because you're up again. And sometimes you don't even get five hours towing the gear, so you dinnae actually get your full two or three hours down below. Because sometimes if you get fast on an

underwater obstruction, and that means your nets get tangled up, that means you've got to heave up, right? So sometimes you don't get that. So it's essential that you go, when you've got a chance to rest that you do, cos you don't want to be fatigued. Because once fatigue sets in, ken, it can be *dangerous* working winches and that, because it's all automated, it's all machines now that hauls gear, it's all winches and net drums and so forth you ken? So you've got to have your wits about you. It's so easy to knock a man's hand off, you're speaking about thick heavy wires, there's no give you see. So that's why it's essential to get your head down, aye if you can get clear of the deck." *"So once you've hauled your nets and you've emptied them out and you've got people working on the fish, do the nets go straight back out again?"* "Straight back out, before even the fish is touched. As soon as the fish comes on board, the nets go back out again. It takes about an hour to, er, from starting to heave to the nets is actually down the bottom again, the whole process takes about an hour ken, from starting to haul to getting them out again. So the fish is actually left until you're working again, aye the nets is back out in the sea."

The intensity and physical strain of the work and the potential dangers involved in fishing are clear. Fishing identity is constructed around hard manual work and a stoic acceptance of the constant physical effort. The pattern of shooting the gear, towing, hauling, shooting the gear again and sorting the catch continues throughout the trip, structuring the fishermen's time at sea. Everyone's energy and attention is focussed on the nets and their catch, with little time for anything other than meals and snatches of sleep. The boat is only working and potentially earning money when the nets are in the sea.

Successful fishing depends upon highly skilled men who work as part of a team and are able to deal with any situation the sea throws at them:

“Sometimes you lose, quite often you lose parts of the net sections you know and you’ve to [make sure you have] the twines and the netting so you can make running repairs out at sea. Cos you can’t come in you see, you’re too far away to come in for repairs. You do repairs aboard ship, put in a piece. It’s just like a patchwork quilt you know, aye these nets you know. [...] So basically, every guy’s got his own job. One guy will see to the grub, another guy will see to something else, so as everything’s tied together. You work as a team, it doesn’t work unless you got a team, that’s the most important thing onboard a ship. That’s why we are so resilient, adaptable, we can make do as the situation arises. Er what’s the word, we can adapt, er utilise things. If something’s broken you sit down and think about it, how to get a repair, cos you don’t want to go back you see. So you can think things out and always, usually, find a way round it. But you’ve got to work, that’s the most important thing, that’s how the Scottish fishing industry has been so successful over the years, it’s teamwork. Everybody knows his job and can do it and can do another guys’ job too so if that falls out, if he’s not there or has to do something else, the other guy steps in and will do his job. It’s like a well-oiled machine, everybody knows what to do, and if a situation arises, a bad situation, say ingress of water or something like that, a cool head you know. Everybody’s kinda tuned in and deals with the situation. Whereas I think when you go offshore with the rigs it’s the case of there’s a rule book, you can’t do that unless you get a written thing from the guy up there, you can’t move that, you know what I mean? It’s maybe against the health and safety rules, but it’s the only thing that works out there. If we had to go by health and safety we just wouldnae, the Scottish fishing industry would be gone before the EEC did awa’ with us, we’d have been gone long before they tried to do away with us...”

Peter is obviously proud of the teamwork and skill involved in his work. He highlights the resilience and adaptability of skippers and their crew, and their

ability to pull together to deal with any situation. Fishermen must be flexible. They do not operate within narrow job descriptions or predefined working conditions, and although each man has a specific role they must be prepared to do whatever is necessary to keep the crew safe and the boat fishing. The adaptability of fishermen to turn their hand to whatever needs doing is constructed as setting them out as a special type of worker. This is neatly expressed by Paul, an ex-fisher who left fishing to work in the oil industry:

"How are you finding the oil?" "I quite enjoy it really, it's awfully different like. I mean you're working in the North Sea, and the crew that I'm with seem to have more difficulty than me. Because being a fisherman all my life, fishermen seem to have that ability to just get stuck in and get the work done regardless. And you say 'right we're gonna do this', and the crew are checking the rules and that. But I'm getting used to it. I mean quite often I just stick on a boiler suit and get stuck in with the rest of the crew, and some of them have never seen anyone come down from the wheelhouse and get stuck in. But that's just how fishing was, I mean in the last two years on my boat I was skipper, chief engineer, cook, everything! But that's just the mentality of the fishing, if it's to be done you get in there and do it!"

The demands of fishing are often constructed in opposition to the work on the oil rigs where the independent work is seen as replaced by adhering to health and safety rules. However, as is discussed in section 6.3, the irony is that one of the key changes within the fishing industry is the implementation of restrictive rules and regulations which has reduced the opportunity for fishermen to perform these adaptive flexible practices.

Although fishing is dependent on the work of the crew as a team, the skipper is ultimately responsible for making decisions on when and where they fish. He must constantly monitor the weather conditions and assess the success of each haul, weighing up the safety of the crew and boat with maximising the catch which will determine their pay.

"So if you went out on a Monday morning you'd be fishing by Tuesday?" "Tuesday until the following Monday, a repetitive process. Unless of course you're knocked off with weather. Sometimes if it's bad weather you take the gear up. If it's bad weather, if it's a storm [of] a wind, really bad storm, you batten everything down, gear comes up on board, and you just dodge. Turn the ship's head up into wind and ride out the gale until it abates a bit, until the weather's fishable again. Or shifting grounds, if the fishing's not too good, like I was telling you earlier about the permit system, you need to shift but if you've a permit onboard you can't shift so you've to come in to port. But if you haven't got a permit you shift, to a different bit, trying a different bit, see if there's any fish. And that could be shifting an hour, two hours, six hours, I've steamed for half a day from one end of the North Sea to another if it's really extreme. You know that's an extreme situation but it does happen. If the fishing's bad at that end and you hear there's really good fishing up the other end of the North Sea you just go, even though it's half a days lost fishing you do it, cos you weigh up the profitability of actually doing it. So that's basically it!"

A successful skipper must be highly skilled and able to quickly read the many variables to assess where is best to fish. The weather and availability of fish are not the only consideration for the skipper. He also has to ensure that the boat is working within the set regulations and is carrying the correct documentation for the area in which they are working. This can be a complicated process, which puts heavy costs on the business. Some fishermen make the decision to consciously flout the rules to ensure a pay for themselves and the crew.

Although fishermen are proud of the physical strength and courage that is involved in fishing, there is a sense that this can overshadow the knowledge and skills that are also necessary to be a successful fisherman. Here Beth from Fraserburgh reasserts the knowledge her husband and son have, both

from the formal education system by obtaining their 'skipper's ticket' and more embodied knowledge of being able to 'read' the water:

"Jamie's got his ticket and everything and [our son] is bright as well. Aye [both of them] are bright, ken. Erm, I mean some people think fishermen, ken, that that's all they *can* do ken, that it doesn't need brains. But aye we've got two smart cookies like! Erm, you'll find that a lot of fishermen, that they're nae all brawn and bravado! They have got a brain as well. [...] I'm nae saying all fishermen are this and all that, but my hubby *does* know where the fish are at certain times of the year. And he'll look at the water and say 'well no we wouldnae get nothing there', because the water is nae whatever it is, thick enough? Aye it's all to the conditions of the water, and where the fish are at certain times of the year. They know they migrate there ken and go with the warmth of the currents ken? They do ken their stuff."

This external identification of fishing as a low skilled job that relies on strength rather than skills or knowledge is one that those within the industry disagree with and fight against. The skills base of fishermen has developed as the industry and methods used have changed. The knowledge required to be successful is not simply reliant on traditional skills and local knowledge of the waters, but has evolved to combine this with the use of highly specialised electrical equipment such as fish finders and navigational equipment, as James, a retired skipper from Lossiemouth explains:

"Some people used to wrongly think that anybody could be a fisherman, nothing could be further from the truth. The work and the apprenticeship, and the ability with, even on the deck work, their hands off ropes and gear and nets and engineering is amazing. And the wheelhouse of that last ship that my son had was so technological and computerised that even I couldn't work it. So that anybody could be a fisherman is an absolute myth. They are very able men."

The boats are not working in complete isolation, and skippers are monitoring the position of other boats and discussing catches with those that will share information. These discussions are not solely work-based and friendships can be maintained through conversations between boats. The communications between fishermen at sea are not confined to their social relations on land, reflecting a wider network of connections between them, as Peter describes:

"So when you're out, are you in contact with other boats quite a lot, so you'd know where the good fishing is?" "Oh yes." "And is that mainly people you'd know socially from here, or is it people from the west coast as well, does it depend on who you know?"

"No, you know something, I've spoken to guys, and it's telex that we use, ken we've all telexs aboard ship now. And I've telexed guys and I've spoke to guys on the radios for years and I've never met them! I've never met them face to face! You maybe think that's a bit stupid, but I can sit and speak to a guy for an hour at a time, speaking about your family and your holidays and ken, about social things. And the fishing, speaking about the fishing, comparing notes, you see? And I've never actually met that guy! And that's the funny thing because for example if you happen to be somewhere socially, say like a fishing exhibition, and you go round with your tags, with your name and the boat, that's what you get when you go into the exhibition, aye so everybody's identity you know. And you could be standing next to somebody and you'll be looking and you'll be 'oh alright John' and he'll be looking at you 'oh alright Peter'! [laughing] So you meet for the first time. So we actually do work as a team most of the time. Although we don't know them socially, the bulk of my acquaintances come from down the Buchan coast and further down to the Fife coast and a lot of them I've never met. So that's something for another day, somewhere, someplace we'll meet! Better surroundings than the North Sea!"

There is a social dimension to the domain of the sea, the connections between fishermen that are maintained through conversations while working extend beyond their place-based connections on shore. Being part of this community at sea is a reciprocal relationship that involves sharing both business information and personal support. This community is an exclusive network which is only open to fishermen at sea who are able to contribute to this exchange.

Peter also highlights the way in which the boat can be an identifier for the fishermen. At the fishing exhibition he is provided with a name tag with his own name and the boat's on it, to make himself known to others. Knowing the names of boats and being known is part of being linked into the networks of connections within the industry. Skippers are known by their boats which places them within these networks. This also extends to fishermen's wives, with one woman retelling a situation at a social event where she was described as "Mike The Renowned's wife" to enable someone to place her within the industry.

As well as speaking with other fishermen out at sea, Peter is also in touch with shore-based industry contacts, keeping up to date on the quantity of fish in the markets and prices being achieved. This allows him to assess when the boat has caught enough to pay the expenses and provide an adequate wage for the crew and so can return to harbour. This final decision is as crucial as when and where to fish and can make or break the trip. Landing to a depressed market can lead to poor prices and a reduced pay. The skipper must have a wide range of skills, the physical strength to work as hard as his crew, the adaptability to deal with changing circumstances or accidents, the knowledge of the behaviour of fish, the weather and the sea, and also a sound grasp of the economics of the industry and the professional contacts to be able to make the most of the catch.

"So what happens once you've done your weeks fishing and you're starting to head back towards home [...] what do you do in terms of starting to sell the fish?" "We count up how much kilos of

each species we've got onboard ship, and er I contact my buyer, my processor, for the shellfish cos that doesn't go into the market, goes straight to the processor. [...] And the salesman for the fish, the fish that goes into the market. The salesman's informed, that's a day prior to landing so as he can inform the buyers what type a species you're coming in with so as they can inform Billingsgate or whatever markets they use down south. So if they want any of that species they phone back and say 'oh aye I'll take so much kilos of this and so much kilos of that', so it's beneficial for us now to telex in a day prior to landing so these guys know what we are coming in with." *"And the sales guy, is he someone from somewhere like Denholms [Fish Selling Company] in Buckie?"* "That's correct, the fish offices. He gets paid commission just like an auctioneer, that's basically what he is, aye auctions the fish. [He] auctions the fish, and there's the day to day running of the boats you know for bills coming in and so forth, he also does that, the fish office does that." *"So you contact them and you're steaming back towards home and where do you usually land to?"* "What port? Whatever port's most beneficial. If there's not a lot a fish in Peterhead, we'll go there, or Fraserburgh or Aberdeen. Whatever port's the least fish, obviously ken the demand will be better, less competition. It's highly, the fishing industry is highly competitive, although I speak to guys at sea, we're all fishing against each other. It's like the Olympics, ken you're trying to get ahead of the next guy. He gets 20 boxes you're hoping for 30, you know, you're trying to out manoeuvre him, that's what it is."

The relationship between fishermen is evidently complex, with men providing support, friendship and business knowledge to each other, whilst trying to maintain a competitive edge. These relationships embed individuals into fishing networks. As will be seen towards the end of this chapter, once fishermen are no longer actively part of the industry they become disembedded from this social world.

Once the boat is back in the harbour, the process of landing and selling the catch begins, and often leads to a visit from the Fisheries Protection Officers. This can be a stressful experience as all the paperwork from the trip is checked. This includes where the boat has been fishing, which permits have been used, how much fish has been caught against how much quota the boat has to use, and whether the skipper is attempting to hide over-quota fish to be sold later through the black market.

"So what happens when you get into harbour?" "Erm aye, well when we land, the fisheries officers, they're the first guys, policemen, they're right on the boat ken, they're onboard ship when we come in. There's the log book, before we can land a box of fish, my log sheet with the total amount a fish that I *should* have onboard ship has to be put into a box before I'm allowed to land one box. If I land one box a fish afore that's posted into the box they fine me right? So the onus is upon me to have that log sheet right because I can't get it back, you know what I mean? If I'm out of my calculations I've had it, because I can't put my hand into the letterbox to get it out and alter it. And they don't give it back to you to alter, they look for a mistake. If they can find a mistake they hammer you, ken? Because there's zero tolerance, that's what it is, zero tolerance. And that's the regime that they've been told, from the Scottish Executive, that [it's] zero tolerance, so you've had it. You can't actually communicate, some of them is so bad you can't get dialogue with them, ken, you cannae converse with them at all. [...] So I start landing, after I'm landed, they count off all the fish that I've put ashore then two of them jump aboard ship, search your boat from top to bottom, everywhere, in the fishroom, everywhere aboard ship to see if I'm hiding... to see if I've got hidden fish, and that's the procedure with them. Then after they're clear then the fish is left on the refrigerated market floor until the salesman comes down. Next the auctioneer, he counts again the fish, counts how much species there is and all the rest of it, er, prior to the sale. And the

processors take them away, each species as they are sold they're pulled out a the market into lorries. So that's about it. Then we clean out the fishroom, take out all the ice, and we put in erm chlorine, we scrub it with chlorine, it's like a bleach kinda solution, and er just so it doesnae, bacteria you know, scrub down. Then we shift around, moor up ship and then we'll be off home."

Being boarded by the Fisheries Protection Officers, or as Peter describes them, the "policemen" of the industry, can be a stressful time when fishermen worry about the accuracy of their paperwork (or any intentional misdemeanours). Although not every landing is actually monitored, Peter, along with other fishermen in this research, describes the activities of the Fisheries Protection Agency as constant harassment. The Agency, although not necessarily all individual Officers, is demonised, constructed as an intolerant inflexible force that is targeting fishermen in order to punish them. As is discussed below, the increased regulation and surveillance of fishermen has impacted upon their understanding of and sense of reward from their work, and so their identity.

Fishermen construct themselves as being self sufficient and independent of external support from Government agencies. They suggest that despite this independence, and the contribution they make to society by being self-sufficient, they are working within a system that offers them no support, as Paul from Buckie who left the industry explains:

"It's when you stop and look back that you think well I did put in the effort, it was hard, it couldnae have been any other way. But you look at how it is now; you think fishermen get a raw deal, a really nasty raw deal. The effort that they put, and the effort they put in to make businesses work, and they're getting no help whatsoever. And if everybody put in as much effort as the fishermen the country would be a better place."

With the fish sold and the boat cleaned, Peter and his crew have time onshore either preparing the boat for the next trip or at home on their trip off. Each trip is an intense period of physically demanding work, which is combined with the stress of uncertainties such as the weather, availability of fish at particular grounds and prices at the market. For six or seven days, life revolves around the patterns of fishing with the skipper and crew working as a team within the confines of the boat. However, 'being a fisherman' does not stop when on shore, and the impact of fishing on the household and family life is explored during Chapter 7.

6.2.2 Summary

The above description of the work of fishing illustrates the aspects of identity that are constructed and performed at sea. 'Being a fisherman' means taking part in intense physical work, which entails enduring sleep deprivation and potentially dangerous situations. Successful fishermen are flexible and adaptable, able to cope with whatever situation arises. The skipper and crew work as a tight-knit team, where each individual has a particular job to do, but must be prepared to step into other roles when the need arises.

Alongside physical strength, stoicism and the capacity to adapt, fishermen possess a varied set of technical skills for catching and processing fish that must be employed to be successful. Time and tasks must be managed to ensure safety of the boat and crew and to maximise the amount of time the nets are in the water. Skippers are constructed as having a particular set of skills. Some are experiential, such as the ability to 'read' the weather and water, and others such as net work and engineering learnt through fisheries college. They are also associated with professional skills, such as the ability to manipulate and maximise market opportunities and to use specialised electronic technology.

However, this is not always recognised by those outside the industry and a negative identification of 'brawn but not brains' is fought against by fishermen.

Skippers increasingly require an ability to comprehend and work within the management system. However, as is discussed in the next section, this does not sit easily with past constructions of identity.

Part of 'being a fisherman' is being embedded in social networks of reciprocity between fishermen. Individual skippers at sea are reliant on others for social interaction and business knowledge. To be a fisherman they must know how to perform appropriately in these relationships, to supply enough information without losing their competitive edge. Skippers are identified by the boats that they work and their networks at sea extend beyond their place-based networks on shore.

It is in the domain of the sea that fishermen interact directly with policy and fisheries management. As is discussed in the following section, this interaction has become increasingly negative and impacts on how fishermen view their work and the rewards associated with it. Part of maintaining fishing identity is involved with constructing fishermen as independent and hard-working, within a context of a management system that persecutes the individual.

6.3 Rules and regulations

One of the major changes in the industry that has impacted on the work worlds of fishermen is the perceived increase in regulation. This has had practical implications that have changed the nature of their work with increasing paperwork and regulations to be kept up to date and complied with. As Adam from Portknockie highlights:

"I spoke to my father-in-law saying that you was coming and said to him 'what would you say has been the big thing, the big difference between now and then?' And he says 'the rules' like. When he went to fishing he just went out and caught fish and came in and landed. And a) there was a lot more fish in the sea

at that time. But there was quotas in his latter years, but they were a target. So you had nae rules, well apart from mesh size which was nae really a problem. But it was a free for all, you just went out and did what you wanted and came in. Likes of now, you've to have log books and quotas. The rules and regulations, we've a file full of them, and they're changing constantly. That's the hardest bit of our job I would say, it's trying to make a living within the rules ken? Well you cannae really!! It's almost impossible ken?"

Adam suggests that his father-in-law worked within a regulatory system that did not interfere with his freedom to fish. This is in contrast to the current system where this independence is constrained by the rules governing the industry. Technical and administrative competences are increasingly part of the skills set required to be a successful fisherman. However as is discussed in the next section, this is not perceived as a positive addition to the job and does not fit with their understandings of what being a fisherman should be.

6.3.1 Lost freedom to fish

While talking about her husband's work, Kate highlights the change in the nature of his work. She cites a shift from the physical work of catching fish to a stronger focus on paperwork and administration, which is associated with a loss of freedom and independence, and increasing surveillance:

"So have the changes in the industry changed the way he sees his job?" "Oh definitely, they have nae got the same freedom now to go out and catch like they used to. Everything they land is monitored, and logged, you've got to log everything, and if you make mistakes with things, just ordinary mistakes, you can face big penalties for it. So he always says he would need a P.A. in the wheelhouse with him now because of the amount of paperwork that's related to the industry. It's just a total change to

what fishermen did before. They've also got to weigh things and make sure of their balances, you ken. How much whitefish they have, along with bycatches, prawns and whitefish and things like that, everything has got to equal out, because again you can land in a lot of trouble if it doesn't."

These practical changes have implications for the way fishermen understand their work. Having to adhere to regulations reduces the freedom fishermen have to perform their adaptive skills. The permit system in place to protect areas where cod are found means that skippers are not able to move around the sea wherever they see the best fishing to be. Complying with the quota system, which sets out how much of which species a boat is allowed to land, prevents fishermen from focussing on certain species where they are available. This tension between a management system that has been put in place to preserve the future of fish stocks, and the construction of it by fishermen as destroying the industry, will be returned to later.

Beth's reference to Jamie needing "a P.A. in the wheelhouse" reflects the increasing amount of administration that now has to be carried out at sea. Several of the fishermen in this research had always left paperwork such as accounts and tax to either their wives or the offices that sold their fish. The paperwork that goes along with running a business had been seen as separate from the work of being a fisherman and as a shore-based or even female shore-based task. However, as regulations have increased, this work has to be completed alongside the practical and technical work of fishing and is seen as conflicting with the masculine physical and technical work of 'being a fisherman'.

Several participants in this research, as Adam states above, remember the fishing industry of the past as a "free for all" compared to the restricted work of today's fishermen. Part of this can be understood as a discourse of the past as a golden age. However, the modern fishing industry is highly regulated and monitored. This perceived restriction is seen as reducing the positive

aspects of enjoyment and excitement associated with being a fisherman, as Kate goes on to say:

"I think that's the thing, like my husband, he's nae got the enjoyment of his job now. He used to love his job. He still wants his job, wants that to be his job, but there's nae the same excitement or enjoyment in the job. There's too much of that side of it, restrictions, regulations, rules, [it] bogs them down. And that seems to take away the pleasure of the job. It's changed their outlook on their work. But there you go, it's quite worrying, it is worrying for them, but however, you just keep going along, see what happens next, there's not a lot more you can do."

Increased regulation of the day-to-day work of fishing has reduced the opportunity for fishermen to perform some of the positive aspects of identity highlighted at the beginning of this chapter. As well as spending more time on administration and less on the physical work of fishing, skippers described the regulations as constantly changing which leaves them with little control over the future of their business, as Peter and Kate (underlined) highlight:

"So what are your plans for the future?" "Well for instance, what can you, as a business plan, you cannae really. If I was going to invest for a new boat, say I decide I'm going to renew my boat, you'd be speaking about a million, upwards of a million pounds investment, and it's crazy. It's like a stockbroker investing a million and a half in a falling market ken? [...] That's what it's like, putting my life's savings in and a noose around my neck and hope that what I'm surmising and telling you [about the decline in the industry] isnae true, you know what I mean. What I've told you might not be true. So it's a case of is it or isn't it, and if I'm wrong it's a case a me gone, ken that kind of investment it's worthless you see." "So you cannae really plan." "You cannae really plan for the future. How can you plan for a future, for example, next year I don't really know how many days I'm going

to get.” “When Christmas comes again, always at the end of the year at Christmas, this is when...” “The horse-trading starts in Brussels, this is when our UK ministers go over to Brussels to negotiate next year’s terms. [...] So actually you cannae make no plans cos next year it could be totally changed.”

Fishermen are also less able to adapt to the availability of fish or their knowledge of particular areas of the sea. Paul, who has now left the industry, found the regulation of the industry conflicted with his understanding of fishing and the sea:

“So how has the industry changed for you?” “Where do you want to start?! Since I started with my own boat there has always been rules and regulations. What they didn’t seem to understand, the people who make the rules, when I had my boat I fished the waters west of Scotland and I knew the waters there. I’d fished there for 12 years, I knew where to find certain types of fish there. And then they draw this line up and say, you’re not allowed to fish there but we’re not stopping you fishing [in another area]. How can you just leave what you know ken? It’s like telling a coalminer they’re not allowed to dig for coal but you’re quite welcome to go and sell bread in a shop! So to be quite honest we just fished where we knew to fish and we told lies, you just filled your log books, saying that one day you sailed into the area you’re allowed to fish in and caught all your fish and then sailed back again!”

Paul suggests that he managed to maintain his preferred working patterns by flouting the regulations in place. However, as is discussed in the following section, breaking the rules of the management system brings with it new identifications of fishermen as criminals. The loss of enjoyment and freedom to fish is cited as the cause of some fishermen leaving the industry. Jill’s family have been involved with the fishing industry as far back as she can remember, and her husband Roy started out in the industry with her father

and brother. Her father retired from the industry, but both her husband and brother sold their boats due to the changing nature of their work. While discussing this Jill was close to tears and below she emotionally describes the lost connection they had to their work:

“But it was like my brother had dreamed of having his fleet of boats, erm, and they wanted ta be the best and provide a good livin’ for their families and it was just a challenge. It was just in their blood, they just wanted to go to sea, er... and sort of they’re fighting [the] elements, but... And there has always been rules, but... it just seemed to be that... now they are just... they’re just, they’ve sorta, a lot of them have given up the struggle, it’s, it’s like a chore, it’s... It’s like they are dragging themselves out to go to sea. There’s not the same... excitement in it, it’s... it’s a burden, it’s just... Because they just don’t know what’s going to be thrown at them next, what other things [politicians] are going to come up with ta make it tougher for them...”

Jill evokes a romantic discourse that recurred in interviews in other households which suggests that, by virtue of being born into fishing families and having fishing “in their blood”, fishermen have an inherited right to fish. This discourse refers to the past, constructing fishermen almost as heroes for “fighting the elements”, taking on the challenges and dangers of fishing. In the present it also constructs fishermen as the battling underdogs, fighting the unfair politicians and management system. This understanding of fisheries management casts the reasons behind restriction and regulation as politically motivated and aimed at removing the Scottish fishing industry, rather than as a response to stock collapses which are caused at least in part by over-fishing. Peter expresses this discourse in a less romantic, more militant way:

“So that’s the danger, that’s the hidden agenda that [the] UK public as a whole don’t see. People down in the middle of the country, inland, they don’t actually see this happening, they don’t understand. All they see in the media is us as bad guys, killing

cod. We've wiped out cod, we've wiped out this. Totally untrue. It's just a clever way to manage a bad job, aye as they have done, aye our UK Government. They've not stood up for our boys at all. And that means your birthright, my birthright as a UK citizen, your birthright that was given to you when you was born, being free to fish in your waters forever, and that's actually been stolen away, given away as such you know."

Placing the blame for the state of the fishing industry and stocks at the door of politicians and the management system recurred frequently in interviews. This well-rehearsed line of argument usually led back to bitterness at the UK's entry into Europe and the CFP which was constructed as a crucial turning point in the history of the Scottish fishing industry. This allocation of blame away from the industry and fishermen themselves, allows fishermen to portray themselves as the victims rather than as part of the cause of stock collapse, and to maintain fishing as a positive identity.

The management regime and those that enforce it are constructed as lacking legitimacy as they do not 'know' the fishing industry in the same way as fishermen do. Below, Adam talks about dealing with the Fisheries Protection Agency call centre in Edinburgh. As a young fisherman in his 30s, Adam feels that he still has a lot to learn about the industry, but that the person he is dealing with cannot know enough about the industry because he does not take part in the physical activity of catching fish:

"It's impossible, cos I [have] been going [to sea] the best of 20 years and I'm still puzzled about a heap of things. So it's impossible for him to ken anything. So he's running a business that he doesnae ken nothing about, fa' a place far awa fa' the fishing coast, and makin' decisions that affect people's lives. And I cannae see, I cannae see how he can see... It's like, it's like me going to Dr Gray's hospital with a first aid course and getting a surgeon's job..."

Only those that are part of the industry are able to 'know' the industry in the same depth as fishermen. This knowledge is in part learnt and earned through the experience of going to sea over many years and is also in part inherited through coming from a fishing family or growing up in a fishing community. Joyce describes the European Commissioner for fishing with disdain:

"I mean the man that's in charge of the fishing I dinnae really think he knows what fishing is all about, it's just a way of life, it's something that's in your blood."

Those managing the industry are constructed as not having either of these ways of knowing the fishing, and so the whole system lacks legitimacy.

Although the most dominant, this defensive discourse of fishermen as blameless victims at the hands of an illegitimate management system was not the only one audible in fishing households. Bill from Buckie recognises the role fishermen have played in the over-fishing of stocks. He regrets the fish that he caught but threw back into the sea as discards. With a quota system in place, fishermen are only allowed to land a certain amount of each species of fish. To maximise returns, only the highest value fish are kept and the rest thrown back into the sea, many already dead or dying:

"One of my main regrets about the fishing is not the fish that I landed and caught, it's the fish that we killed. That was the problem. And that's the major problem now in the North Sea and fishermen you speak to still don't see that. Because when you go out and you are totally blinkered, and you are maybe taking like 30 or 40 boxes of fish onto the deck outta your net in a haul, but you're maybe only keeping 10 or 15 boxes outta that. You don't think about the 25 that are going away that are too small, that if they grew up, they're 25 boxes now, but if they grew up they'd maybe be 50 or 100 boxes. But you're not thinking, you're thinking about the 15 boxes that you've kept. You're so blinkered

you think that that is the way of life like. That unfortunately is the nature of the job now and one of its downfalls.”

Bill, who had come from a long line of Buckie fishermen, sold his boat and left the industry in 1999 to work on oil support vessels. This distance from the industry and his reduced dependence on fishing as a source of identity perhaps allows him to be more critical in the way he constructs the role of fishermen. Other participants in this research also raised doubts about the way in which they fished or were fishing, but none in such an open way as Bill. The dominant discourse constructed the management system as politically motivated and scientifically flawed, which diminished its validity in the eyes of fishermen. This then impacts upon their compliance with the system, as is discussed in the following section.

6.3.2 Criminalisation

Alongside this narrative of fishermen as victims is a discourse of fishermen as criminals. Participants in this research spoke of being treated like, and made to behave like, criminals. The increased presence of Fisheries Protection Officers in the northeast ports was often brought up during interviews. Fishermen spoke as if they felt they were under surveillance and feared having their log books and catch inspected in case they had made a mistake. As George, a retired skipper from Buckie, highlights:

“All the guys down the harbour here are committed, but it’s very difficult to keep going when its just restrictions, restrictions. When you’ve got a good catch for instance, it’s a big buzz that, you’ve been away a few days, got a good catch, coming ashore, the skipper can’t relax, he’s worrying about getting them ashore. Will the fish officer be there, ken? It’s a big, big worry now, I don’t think I could cope. And you can’t land in Macduff or Whitehills for

example, because they're not designated landing ports⁷ now, and you've got to give officials four hours warning before you go to make sure they are there. And if you don't do that for instance at Macduff it's a *criminal* offence not a *fisheries* offence, it's a law that you cannot land fish there without four hours notice. There's more fisheries officers in Peterhead now than there is police, even though there's a problem with drugs. Biggest branch of the Royal Navy is fisheries protection branch... how can it work eh?"

Being dealt with through the criminal system and with a perceived high number of Fisheries Protection Officers, participants constructed the official perception of fishermen as that of a criminal. As Peter describes below, the pressure from being monitored is cited as a reason for leaving the industry. He goes on to make the distinction between fishermen and 'real criminals', that fishermen are basically honest but are being treated in the same way as "wide-boys from London back streets".

"I've got one friend started the sea the same time [as me], he's the only guy left, one out of maybe 20. And they all had their own boats and they had done reasonably well, but the *pressure* got to them. As I say, it's enormous pressure [...] with the limitations, with the criteria that we've to adhere to you know. It's so easy to make a mistake and these guys are down on top of you. And that's basically what's happened to guys, they've *hounded* honest men. Honest guys, nae criminals, nae wide-boys from London back streets that was doing whatever, you know. This was honest men going out into the sea, catching fish for a living, honest guys, they actually hounded them... [...] Driven them awa', definitely, it's a disgrace, but that's what happened, and

⁷ Designated landing ports have Fisheries Protection Agency (FPA) officers on site and there is no requirement to report in to the Agency in advance of landing during specified hours. If a skipper wishes to land into a smaller harbour where there is no permanent FPA presence or outside these times, they have to give four hours notice. This allows the Agency time to be at the harbour to meet the boat as it comes in if they wish to check landings against quota and logbooks. This system was introduced to deter the landing of illegal and unreported catches.

there's no roundabout or fairy stories to disguise it, ken that's the plain facts like."

However, the discourse of fishermen as criminals is not an unfounded identification, as many fishermen were breaking the rules and committing offences by landing over-quota fish (black fish) or working in areas which they are restricted from. All the people I spoke with either admitted committing a fisheries offence in the past or knew other people that had. However, this behaviour was not constructed as wilful law-breaking for personal gain, but something honest men had been forced into, again evoking the idea of fishermen as victims. As Kate from Cullen explains:

"But no my friend's son he's at the fishing as well [...] but he's pretty sick of it, he would like out of it. Just I think black fish landings, they have to come in, a lot of his fish has to be blacked. And it's the creeping about trying to get it off [the boat] and trying nae to be caught, and he does nae like it. He's fed up of it, its wearing on him I think. But they need to do that to pay their boat and make a living. So it's turning them into, what would you say, honest men into crooks really. They dinnae want to be, but a lot of them has been forced into it because of the restrictions, because of the policing. There's more police polices the fleet of boats than does anything else, ken?"

Criminal activity is described as something that fishermen have been forced into to make a living rather than a free choice that they have made. Again they have been the victims at the hands of a flawed system that, according to Jill whose son left the industry when the family boat was sold, no boat could make a living within:

"[Your son] wouldn't like to go back to the fishing?" "Not if it's the way it is. He would, he just dinnae like the rules and regulations, the fishery officers at you all the time, because, to be... I mean to be honest there's not one of the boats could survive if they were

fishing legally, just no way they could survive. And the Government, well maybe they dinnae because they dinnae understand it, but those who know, know that everybody's breaking the rules and it's the only way to survive, and it's not to make a fortune it's to keep the wolf from the door... And it's horrible; it's horrible that they've got to do that."

Contradictory narratives about landing black fish and other activities that contravene regulations came through in this research. Some fishermen felt that they were still unable to operate within the regulations, while others had been able to lease or buy unused quota to be able to land all their fish legally. Most recognised the problems that these practices cause both for the individual by not achieving market price for the fish, and for the management system as there is not an accurate picture of the amount of fish being taken from the stocks. However, all understood that this kind of activity was illegal and felt that it was still going on around them. Although there was recognition that this activity is illegal, the identification of criminal was rejected as fishermen attempted to retain the moral high ground through their explanation of it being carried out through need not greed and of the system as flawed.

6.4 Building a crew

At the beginning of this chapter Peter begins to illustrate the relationship between fishermen as a crew, and how it contributes to successful fishing and fishing identity. The changes within the industry discussed above have created a situation where fishing is no longer seen as a stable or positive occupation. This has led to a situation where fishermen are leaving for other industries and the next generation of young fishermen are not entering the industry. The lack of local crew means that boats are now becoming reliant on migrant labour. Traditional networks of crew are breaking down, with implications for understandings of being a fisherman and constructions of fishing identities.

6.4.1 The importance of the right crew

As Peter described in the first section of this chapter, being part of a close-knit, effective team of crew is essential to the efficient and safe running of a boat and part of what it means to be a fisherman. The crew spend a trip of perhaps ten days together working intensively in a confined space. Below, Jack describes the importance of having the right person for the job in relation to replacing his cook who recently retired:

“It takes a while for people to settle in, you see, cos you gotta understand you’re spending 24-7 with the same lads every week, week in week out, so for a week you cannae get out ken? To get a cup of tea you’ve ta [breathes in as if to let someone pass] it’s roomy enough, it’d be like this [pointing to his kitchen] but you’re living on top of one another for a week. And then for a week you wouldnae see one another. Aye maybe you see one of the lads in the town or if you go for a pint or something, or maybe bump into them. But basically you dinnae see them. So anyway [my cook] retired and I was sad to see him go, cos he was a good lad, he was old-school ken? He was old school. He’d been going to sea for 40 years I suppose. So, and it’s quite hard to replace a guy like that. The lad we’ve got now, I prefer erm, like some jobs aboard the boat, I prefer an older lad for the cook ken? Cos he’ll be cleaner, ken?!”

The crew must work well together to enable the boat to fish and be successful. Traditionally, crews were made up of male relatives and neighbours; however this is less common now. Jack was pleased that he had been able to find a new crew member who was also from Buckie, but thought that he was probably the only local boat with a full Buckie crew. Local crew are usually people who are known to the skippers through social relations on shore. Employing locally also supports the important contribution to the community by fishing, both economically and socially, that is discussed in Chapter 8. However, these local ties are complex and create a massive

sense of responsibility of the skipper toward his crew, as described by Bill who is also from Buckie:

“And when you’d got your fish landed and you’d settled up that week, we used to go into the office 32 times a year and square up and give your crew a pay and work it all out like, that was immediately finished with. And when you went out next time you started with nothing, you were starting again with nothing and you had to build up. You had to give your crew a pay. Now I had the same crew on the last boat for ten years [...] basically the same crew all the time. And there was three of them lived within a hundred yards of this house at the time like aye. But that was the main pressure in the fishing, was that 32 times a year you started from nothing and at the end of the day you *had* to give your crew a pay like, you had to generate enough profit to keep them. Now that makes you very blinkered and single-minded, you see nothing else, but er when you go out, I never slept for the first two days of a trip, every trip when we went out, until you started to get enough fish in the hold. [...] You’ve got to give your crew, your good friends, it’s on my mind the whole time the crew, you had to get your crew a good pay, or you wouldn’t keep them. And apart from the physical thing of wanting to keep a good crew they were families that I knew like, and you dinnae want to let them down like... It was just such an intensive thing, and it was always at the back of everyone’s mind.”

Bill felt a sense of responsibility for being able to provide a wage for his crew, who were also his neighbours and friends. Alongside this, he needed to be able to pay them in order to keep them satisfied so they did not leave to a more successful boat or a different job. Keeping good crew reflects well on the skipper and suggests that he has been successful as a fisherman. Good crew maintain the boat to a high standard and this is one of the visible signs of a successful skipper that can be read by others, as Jamie from Fraserburgh states:

“If you take a walk down the harbour you can see the boats that have good crews because they are clean, ken you would know right away. But then again, you’ve got to keep earning enough to keep them there, if you’re not earning enough they’re off, which is understandable ken.”

The relationship between a skipper and his crew is reciprocal. A skipper needs the right crew to be able to perform successfully. If the skipper is successful the crew will receive the financial rewards of fishing and the kudos and other social benefits of being part of a successful crew. If the crew are satisfied with their earnings and committed to the skipper they will stay on the boat and work hard to make their fishing successful. This then reinforces the skipper’s identity as a successful fisherman.

However, building and maintaining a tight-knit crew is becoming more difficult. Participants in this research suggested this was based on three interlinked issues: losing crew as individuals leave the industry, predominantly for the offshore oil and gas industry, a lack of young people joining the industry and the resulting need to use non-local labour.

6.4.2 Losing crew

The implications of leaving the industry for the identity of individuals are discussed in section 6.5 below. The loss of fishermen from the industry also has implications for maintaining strong crews, and so successful fishermen, and for the sense of collective fishing identity. Below Kate talks about the difficulties of not having a regular crew and how his can prevent boats from leaving the harbour.

“And there’s so many people that once was in the industry that are nae there anymore, for one reason or another they are out of the fishing industry. And it’s difficult for [skippers] to get crews and things now because lads have left. A lot of crews have left to

go off to the oil which maybe it was just as well that the oil was there you ken? It's made it a lot more difficult if they do, not my husband cos he has a regular crew, but there's a lot of boats who are looking for lads to get away to sea, and they canna get away to sea cos they haven't got the men, and that causes a lot of problems as well."

Kate was quick to point out that her husband was not having crew difficulties, as this might reflect badly on him as a fisherman. Other participants also spoke of skippers phoning round as they were due to leave harbour trying to get a full compliment of crew.

As crews begin to break down, skippers are left in a vulnerable position, unable to perform successfully without a reliable crew. Below Richard from Hopeman describes the pattern of crew problems as he sees it and how this impacted on his ability to fish. His situation became so difficult that he decided to decommission his boat in 2002:

"So have the crew problems been widespread?" "In 2001 a lot of them left to the oil, because they were taking on a lot then. It was a steady wage and the fortnight on fortnight off that really attracted them. And they were really good guys that went, you know real good with the nets and that. And there was no one to replace them, you know some of them just really weren't worth taking and you couldn't rely on them to take a watch and that. And so we just got where it was just three of us taking the boat out, because then you got a better share, a better wage. [...] A lot of men nowadays are getting damn lazy. [...] I actually lost a boat [...] and we had to have five or six weeks off, and I wanted to get another boat, so we got this other boat. And it was the worse thing I could of done. After that, well I'd had a steady crew for ten years, and when I lost the boat half of them left to other boats. And others stayed but didn't like the white fish because there wasn't the money in it, so we converted to dual purpose for the

prawns as well, and that cost about £30,000. But still the guys did nae like it, and so the guys were leaving and we couldn't get good crew to replace them. So at some points there was just three of us working the boat, and you just came in knackered all the time. And so when the decommissioning came up I just said to my wife 'we'll have to take it or we'll end up in a bad way'."

With a climate of insecurity in the industry and people leaving for the perceived security of the oil industry, any problem with the boat can provide the perfect opportunity for crews to leave to other boats or occupations. The connections between the crew and the skipper and boat have been weakened. Without a strong committed crew, a skipper cannot perform successfully as a fisherman.

6.4.3 Lack of young people coming into industry

The problems of maintaining a strong crew are seen as compounded by a lack of new entrants to the industry. The fisheries courses intake at the local college was a frequently cited barometer of this problem. When Jack from Buckie was talking about replacing his cook, I asked if it would have been difficult to find someone if he did not know a young fisherman looking for a job:

"Oh aye crew's a problem, the crew is going to be a problem. Erm cos I think in '84, I just read Fishing News so I get all my information from that, in '84 er, ken the Aberdeen College? Ken like their intake you could say for fishing, fishing and aquaculture, erm was about 40 or 50 youngsters, with two intakes a year, and I think last year, Banff and Buchan College do it now, I think it was seven! [...] So there's definitely not the lads coming in."

George, also cites the training courses as a way of measuring the state of the industry. He suggests that young people are put off from becoming fishermen by the negativity surrounding the industry:

"I remember when my son started training there was 104 young men went through the training course, and within three years they were down to three. Courses are just drying up now. There's a lot of gloom and doom in the paper, that's probably put a lot of people off. Its gloom and doom, maybe more so than deserved, put a lot of people off. Quite rightly I suppose, young men and families reading bad situations, [they] don't go to that job, that's what happened. But there's still some young guys that have went to the job, but a lot of good men left it, went to the oil, and because they're good fishermen, they're good at the oil too, so they've got good jobs now, fair enough. But we've lost them, a lot of good lads."

During the summer of 2006 there were serious concerns about the long-term viability of fisheries courses running at Banff and Buchan College, Fraserburgh. This was reported in the local and industry press as a further threat to the future of the fishing industry and its connections with northeast Scotland. A rescue package has since been put in place by Aberdeenshire Council and other industry partners.

Along this stretch of coast, fishing used to be seen as the best option for young people. It was a positive choice where high incomes and successful careers could be made. However, the tables have turned and now shore based work is seen as a better option, as Richard describes:

"I mean it's good for the young ones if they can, it's different now, but when we started the sea we earned £30 a week and it went up to £70, and if you got on a good boat it went up to £200. Now that was a lot of money then for somebody who was single. And then you went from £200 to perhaps £500 and then some tips,

perhaps even £1000 [...] You wouldnae get that now, well some boats are. But if they can get a trade they can get that working the shore side. Some of these tradesmen, you hear horror stories going around, some of these brickies and joiners now working as a subcontractor they are making up as high as £2000 a week as wages and that's happening in this neck of the woods, never mind down in London. What kind of boat can provide that kind of money aye as a deckhand, I mean it's very hard to beat."

Several participants in this research suggested that the problem of new entrants to the industry was particularly bad in Fraserburgh because of a high level of drug use amongst young men. Jamie, from Fraserburgh, was one of the few skippers I came across that had young men (under 30), which also included his son, in his crew. He was very concerned about the drugs issue, which as is discussed in Chapter 8, is often described as an indication of the decline of Fraserburgh. Jamie sees drug use as creating a missing generation in the industry:

"So, from other people I've spoken to, it sounds quite unusual that you've got quite young guys on your boat?" "There's nae the young folk coming through, there's a whole generation, mair maybe just slightly younger [than our son]. Well it's potluck again, we was very, very lucky as parents that ours never got into drugs. In the Broch there's a generation of my son's age, for five year, six year even, mid 20s now maybe early 20s til about 30 year old, a generation that doesn't exist in this town, committing suicide, and it's all through drugs. We was very, very lucky. The young folk that is coming up now seem to be a wee bit mair educated and scared from taking drugs, but er, you'll notice that in the fishing, they're either coming up right young now and coming into the fishing, or they're old folk that has been there 30 odd, well I'm saying old but 35 year plus. But when you come down to that 30, 20s age, there's just a whole generation missing."

Drug use is obviously something that skippers have to be careful of when finding new crew, but there is some level of local knowledge as to who would be unsuitable to work on the boats, as Jamie goes on to discuss after one of his young crew interrupts our interview:

“But aye, the Broch definitely, you see the lad that came in, there's a whole generation of his age that's hardly in the Broch anymore. They're missing from the fishing industry. And that was all through drugs. Whether that was to do with the fishing, but I think drugs is happening all over the country, it's global, it's nae just up here. But it's a small community and if somebody calls you for a chance shot and he says his name and you know the name you say [with sarcasm] 'aye ok I'll phone you back', no you dinnae give them work.”

Jamie suggests that drug use is not so prevalent in the youngest generation of young men and these are beginning to enter the industry. However, as Richard continues below, others are less confident that young men are turning to the industry:

“So I just think that, I dunno, you can see it happening, there's no young people coming in. The older guys has all went and there's left with this middle age group and there's no young guys coming up. There will be the odd one or two but there's nae enough. And then what's going to happen in another ten years? I mean I think, being honest, unless the Government can do something, give proper aid and grants to build new boats and sort this quota thing out and blah blah blah and days at sea, I can honestly see it just collapsing and it will be devastating. It's devastating now for communities but never mind if that was to happen in another five or ten years time, or even sooner.”

Richard sees the lack of young people coming into the industry, combined with other issues, as raising serious concerns over what future the fishing

industry has in this corner of northeast Scotland. Without new entrants the industry will face serious operational difficulties. In the meantime the lack of commitment to the industry by the next generation is seen as a barometer of the insecurity of fishing. With the industry viewed in such a negative light, a positive identity based on 'being a fisherman' is difficult to maintain.

6.4.4 Becoming reliant on 'foreign' labour

Losing crew, either to other boats or more commonly to other industries, combined with a lack of new entrants has created a situation where some skippers must look further afield to recruit crew. During the course of this research many participants spoke of increasing employment in the Scottish industry of fishermen from Eastern European countries. Having to rely on labour from other countries was a commonly cited illustration of the problems of maintaining a crew, as Jill from Cullen explains with respect to her husband's last boat:

"In terms of the crew, was it sort of a long term crew that you had had for a while?" "Well, not er... recently no, because some of them saw the way the fishing was going so they wanted erm more security and a lot of them went off shore. But when they first went to sea, aye, most of them, it was all crew that they had had, we'd had crew for years and years and years... But, and of course, the boat that Roy was on before he went to sea with [another skipper's boat], was, they had foreign. They had a Latvian, and it seems terrible that er you have to get crew fa' Europe to come and work on your boat! Because other men were getting jobs elsewhere."

Jill's description of "crew fa' Europe" ties into the construction, and reality, of the local background of all the fishermen in this research. To be a fisherman along this coast means almost exclusively coming from this geographical area. However with 'local' men not entering or staying in the industry,

skippers have to turn to crew that do not fit this local identification of fishermen. Beth from Fraserburgh expresses this localist discourse and frames the use of labour from abroad as a last resort that she is glad she and her husband have not had to reach:

"I mean there has been a difference in finding crew, local crew. A lot of the young fishermen got into drugs [...] so that was maybe when the net widened and they were looking for erm... Eastern block countries, folk was coming in from one of them filling a gap. Now we've never *had* to go down that road, touch wood, as you might say, but er I know some skippers have gotten mair fishermen from there, engineers and different walks of life."

This construction of non-local labour as others, as outsiders, is related not just to geography, but also to local knowledge. As Adam from Portknockie highlights below, the quality of the fishermen may be as good as local fishermen, but they are unknowns. By contrast men who have grown up along this coast are known, their history and family, and so preferable to the unknown:

"So is there still a few people about [wanting a job as crew]?" "No there's mair and mair folk getting into this foreign labour, just because there's nae new recruiting in the fishing, and with any decommissioning the crews seem to go awa' [out of the industry]. It's very difficult. I mean I've heard of boats being stuck in the harbour for two or three days cos they cannae get replacement crew ken? And this is why the foreign labour's coming about. I'm not saying I wouldnae do it but it would be a last resort, just because I like local folk, so it is difficult to replace people. Although a lot of this foreign folk are good workers." *"But you'd just rather have somebody you know?"* "Aye. And some folks are awfully catty they tend to brand you for taking on cheap labour, they think you're doing it for financial reasons, it's nae really the case."

Adam also highlights the financial implications of taking on non-local labour and how this can be perceived by others in the industry. In many cases, these fishermen are hired through an agency and they are paid a set wage rather than a share of the catch. This not only goes against one of the traditional systems that makes up crew relationships, but also means lower expenses for the boat and skippers can undercut other boats. This is creating an atmosphere of suspicion surrounding those skippers who are employing non-local labour. Jack explained this to me in relation to a bid he had put in to be a charter boat for a group of scientists. He was surprised that he was beaten on price by a much larger boat:

“And I thought to myself, well we’re pretty cheap to run so how come he can run his boat cheaper? And I says this to one of my crew, I says ‘we’re nae getting the scientists’ and I told him who’s got it. And he says ‘his crew’s all Lithuanian, so he’s nae paying his crew nothing’. He’s taking them in for three month at a time, they bide on the boat erm, what their standard of living is I don’t know, but obviously they’ve a good [one] when they go home which is good for them. But he’s taking British tax payers money to take charters out to pay a Lithuanian crew, when British guys are forced out by price because of that, it’s crazy!”

Relying on labour from elsewhere in Europe conflicts with the localist and nationalist ideas prevalent in this area. It is constructed as an indicator of the poor state of the industry, that while local men would once have gone straight into the industry and stayed there until retirement, ‘being a fisherman’ is no longer seen as a positive choice. With a lack of local men, skippers now have to rely on ‘outsiders’ to crew their Scottish boats.

6.5 Leaving the industry

Individuals who leave the industry face major changes to their lives. The impacts on family and household life are dealt with in the following chapter, but there are also impacts in terms of losing aspects of their working lives that previously contributed to individual senses of identity.

6.5.1 Lost connections

For fishermen, and skippers in particular, fishing provides a focus for most of their time especially at sea, but also when onshore. When they are no longer involved with the industry they have to find new things to occupy their time. Bill, from Buckie, sold his boat in 1999 after more than 20 years as skipper of his own boat and joined the oil industry skippering guard ships and stand by boats. I asked him what it was like adjusting to his new lifestyle:

“So did it take some getting used to, having a month off, what did you do for your month off?” “Well I got involved in gardening like, I make it my hobby like. I’d never ever got anything involved with a garden in my life. And I would never be a gardener, I’ve killed more plants than I’ve kept alive, but I’ve enjoyed it and it’s taken up a lot of my time. And well, my wife and I, we both like to holiday. We had to develop other interests.”

Bill talks about his new found pastime and the way it has “taken up a lot of my time” in a way that almost implies that the large amounts of free time that come with oil work compared to fishing are not welcome. That without his new hobby of gardening he would not know how to fill his time now that he is not preoccupied with fishing. The loss of fishing from his life has also caused a readjustment of his own sense of status within society, as he goes on to say:

“One thing that does, and this is a totally candid thing again, coming from the industry like where you’re the top like aye. Well I’m not saying I was the top within the industry. But I was at the top of my own career, I had my own boat. That’s a, psychologically, it’s a real difficult thing to wind down from like and to get away from like. And like when I was a skipper you got respect like, and people in the town look at you like ‘he’s a skipper of a boat, he’s got respect’. And when you stop it, all of a sudden aye you’re just another person like aye. Although it’s like a... a lot of people have problems, well not problems but you can see it, you’re a different person almost.”

Being a skipper formed a crucial part of Bill’s sense of self, and how he felt he was identified by others. This identity of skipper brought with it respect and recognition of his achievements. Now that Bill no longer has his own boat, and so is not a skipper in the fishing industry, he does not identify himself and feels others do not identify him with these traits.

Leaving the industry also breaks the work-based connections a fisherman has with other fishermen. Fishermen’s networks are both social and an important source of business knowledge. Once out of the industry, a fisherman is no longer part of the sharing of business information, as Bill goes on to highlight:

“[P]eople I’ve spoken to up Lossie way have sort of said that when they came out of the fishing they’ve lost touch with [...] other fishermen?” “Aye that’s definitely the case, but it’s not a thing of choice like. Well birds of a feather flock together. [...] I still know a lot of fishermen well enough, but it’s the same... When you’re involved with the fishing industry, like when I speak to other skippers that are still within the fishing, they’re still so intensively involved with the fishing, when they say to me ‘what’s going on’, it’s on a different level to me, they’ve not got time for social chit chat like aye. You drift apart, even though there’s nothing intentional about it, you drift apart. You’ve different

interests and different things going on in life like. From their point of view I'm old, I'm no good to them anymore, because I, they could of gleaned something from me in the past and I could of gleaned something from them, just a bit of interaction like. When fishermen went to the pub before and spoke, it's like a tussle all the time, you can't relax for a second. But that's gone, so obviously you've got different interests like that. When I meet them and say 'how are you doing', it's different from when I said 'how are you doing' before, it's a different 'how are you doing' now like. And they're the same back. There's no doubt about it, I've very little interaction with the fishing now like, it's not through choice, it's just the way life is I guess."

Without current fishing knowledge, Bill is excluded from the performance of fishing identity through the "tussle" of sharing of information.

Paul, who is in his late 30s and had been skipper of his own boat before selling it in 2002, expressed similar sentiments about becoming excluded from the social networks he was once a part of. However, with family still fishing he had stronger current connections to the industry than Bill. Paul was more concerned about his lost connection with his past, or his history:

"It's very hard now, it's very hard when you think about... I mean when I stopped the fishing, I was glad to get away from it. I had to I would say, for my health's sake and everything. I mean the rules and regulations they were... You were just buried in rules and regulations, some of the things, most of the things were silly, you couldnae abide by them. But, er, when I left the fishing I was glad to get away from it. But my father, it was him that made me think a wee bit. He was glad I was away as well, but he says 'it's really sad to see somebody like yourself [...] since you was able to walk you was fishing and down aboard the boats'. And every time my dad's boats came in I was down, as a toddler. He bought us a wee boat to work creels. Holidays with your parents? No

way! You were working, and that was how we spent our young lives really. Left the school and you just worked to get a boat of your own and it was just your aim. My father still laughs he says 'you used to keep scrapbooks when we were kids and the cuttings were all different fishing boats!' He says 'and that was your life, and to see somebody like yourself who I have seen for 40 years fishing fishing fishing to be *glad* to be getting away from the fishing... [...] that says volumes of how the fishing industry is at the moment. When there's somebody like yourself delighted to have washed their hands of it...' But that's just life, life goes on. Sometimes, sometimes you feel betrayed, you do, because fishing as it was when I first started I would have been quite happy to do the fishing all my life, I would..."

Paul had grown up surrounded by the fishing industry and had immersed himself in it as he built up his career. However, the stress of trying to operate within the regulations and to get away with flouting them, had taken its toll on Paul's health and so he had decided to leave. When he went into the fishing he thought he would be working in the industry until retirement. The trajectory of his life has been dramatically changed and he has lost the long established connection he had with fishing.

6.5.2 Still fishermen

Although leaving the industry has severed some of the connections fishermen had with the industry, the identity of 'being a fisherman' does not simply disappear. Although in the section above, Paul felt disconnected from his own past and heritage, in the quote below he uses the analogy of fishing being 'in the blood' to reiterate and reinforce his connection to the industry and his status as a fisherman despite having left the industry:

"Quite often I think about the fishing, its obvious because it's in your blood. I'm 40 now, I've just been brought up for 40 years

with the fishing, but I just got sick of it the last few years like, every time you think something good about the fishing, you're not having to think very deep to remember the bad things."

Stuart from Lossiemouth also decommissioned his boat in 2002 and went to the oil industry, but still finds it difficult to think of himself as anything other than a fisherman:

"There's a lot of these boys on the standby boats and things like that, if things were better, especially the deckys, that if things were better they'd probably go back to the fishing. I mean like me, if somebody was to say to me, like if you were to meet somebody and you were speaking to them, and they were 'oh I'm a policeman what do you do?' It's on the tip of my tongue to say 'oh I'm a fisherman', although I'm nae a fisherman, I still think of myself as a fisherman, ken what I mean?"

He would be keen to go back to the fishing if the situation improved. It is almost as if his time outside the industry is just a temporary phase and that underneath his oil-worker's exterior he is still a fisherman. The aspects of fishing identity such as family and local connections, and growing up surrounded by the industry are not wiped out by not working in the industry.

6.6 Discussion

This chapter has explored how the identity of fishermen is constructed and performed through their work in the domain of the sea. For fishermen, identity is built around key shared symbols. The dominant discourse is of highly skilled and hard working men, fighting the elements to earn their catch. Their work is physically demanding, with little time for anything other than a few snatches of sleep whilst out at sea. The crew must operate as a tight-knit team, with each member a specialist in their own role, but able to adapt to any situation that arises. The skipper in particular must have skills in a variety of

fields and be able to perform the technical tasks of fishing, as well as make the decisions on when and where to fish and land their catch. No two trips are the same, and the skipper must read the fishing and markets and adapt to every situation to maximise the return for himself and the crew. The relationship between skipper and crew is reciprocal, with the skipper dependent on a strong crew to be able to perform, and the crew dependent on sound decisions from the skipper to make their living and be successful fishermen. The skipper is also tied into relationships with other skippers while out at sea. They provide a social network of support and interaction, but also a complex system of sharing carefully considered information about their relative successes in different locations.

However, the central theme of this thesis is change and fishermen perceive the greatest change as the increased regulation of their work at sea. This has led to an increase in the amount of administrative work skippers in particular have to do, which pulls them away from the traditional tasks of fishing. Administration and paperwork are understood by fishermen as a shore-based, and particularly female task, and this does not fit with their understandings of what it means to be a fisherman.

Fishermen also construct the increased regulation of fishing as a form of surveillance where their integrity as fishermen is questioned to the point where they see themselves as being criminalised by the system. For some this identification of 'criminal' is correct, but it is rejected by fishermen. To maintain a positive sense of identity from their work they construct the management system as flawed. Those that manage the industry are accused of not 'knowing' the fisheries in the same depth of fishermen, who by virtue of birth and upbringing have fishing 'in their blood'. The regulations are seen as politically motivated and designed to target Scottish fishermen to remove them from the industry. This, along with breaking the rules through need not greed, allows fishermen to maintain the moral high ground. The management system put in place to conserve fish stocks, and so protect the future of the fishing industry, is constructed by fishermen as the cause of the problems facing them. In order to maintain a positive identity in the context of fisheries

restructuring fishermen position themselves as the victims at the hands of a flawed system.

Following on from the increased regulation and its associated impacts on identity is the growing problem of maintaining a crew. With a growing sense of insecurity in the industry, men are leaving often for the offshore oil and gas industry. The close relationship between a skipper and his crew is breaking down for some boats and skippers are left in a vulnerable position of being unable to go to sea because of a lack of stable crew. This problem is being compounded by a lack of new entrants to the industry. Fishing is no longer seen as the preferred option for young men in this area and the lack of commitment to the future of the industry calls into question the positive identities that can be built on it. With these crew problems, skippers are looking further afield for labour and many participants spoke of an influx of 'foreign' labour from Eastern Europe. This is understood as a reflection of the instability in the industry. Local men are no longer committed to the industry and skippers now have to rely on outsiders to work in the Scottish industry.

Those who leave the industry, and are no longer part of the work world of fishing, face challenges to the sense of identity built on this work. With fishing no longer the central focus of their lives, men must find new activities to occupy their time. Those who have left fishing spoke of feeling excluded from the social networks of the industry because they could no longer perform the information exchange between skippers. In wider social networks in the community, ex-skippers have lost the central respected position they once held. However, as fishing identity is built on more than the activities of going to sea, ex-fishermen are able to maintain some sense of fishing identity by using the symbols of being fishermen by birth and upbringing, having fishing 'in their blood'.

7 The Household

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7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the household, the private world of fishing that provides the support mechanisms which enable fishermen to go to sea. Women form the backbone of these households, with their labour running the home and bringing up children. The rhythms of the fishing trips provide the structure around which the household functions. It is also from the household that many of the shore-based aspects of the business are carried out. The changes in the work worlds of fishing described in the previous chapter have implications for the household and the identities that are drawn from being part of a fishing household. This chapter begins with a vignette from Jill and Roy's interview to illustrate this private world of fishing, before moving on to explore the changes that are impacting upon households. These are in two key areas, how the changes in fishermen's work worlds are brought home to the household, and the renegotiation of household relations when the fisherman is no longer active in the industry.

7.2 The private world of fishing

The following vignette of one household that took part in this research is designed to provide insight into the private world of fishing households. Similarly to when I asked about 'average fishing trips', asking women what it

is like to run a fishing household caused some degree of amusement and wonder as to what I could want to know. Although to an outsider the implications of living with a fisherman may seem noteworthy, for the women in this research it is just day-to-day life. For most of the women it is also something they were socialised into whilst growing up, and is, as Jill later puts it, "all I've ever known". However these day-to-day details provide insight into how fishing identities are constructed and performed through the household.

7.2.1 Jill and Roy's story

Jill and Roy are both from Cullen and are in their early 50s. They met at school and married at 18. Jill is from an established fishing family, with her grandfather, uncles, father and brother all fishermen. Roy is from a farming family and his route into fishing was to join Jill's father's boat. Despite not being from a fishing family, Roy had always been interested in going to sea. After leaving school he served an apprenticeship at a nearby net making business, before securing a berth on Jill's father's boat at 21. After several years on this boat, Roy and Jill's brother bought their own boat and have since had two new boats, the most recent in 1995. After struggling to maintain a stable crew and facing increasing financial and regulatory pressure, they decided to sell the boat in 2003. Roy then moved onto a friend's boat and intends to stay in fishing as crew until retirement. Jill works part-time as a teaching assistant in a local school. They have two daughters and a son, all in their 20s. Their son worked on the family boat until it was sold and he now works in the oil industry.

Women living with fishermen are responsible for the majority of the work that goes towards running the household and bringing up children. With their husbands at sea they are effectively running a single-parent household, and as Jill says, have to "be mother and father". These women are constructed by both men and women involved in the industry as strong, independent and capable, as opposed to passive housewives. They are respected for their ability to take charge and to deal with whatever life might throw at them while

their husbands are away. However, when the fishermen returns home the balance of power and responsibility must be renegotiated:

"This might sound strange, but there's one aspect that I would really like to try and get my head around, running a fishing household. Because I've got no idea what it must be like, and I guess that must be sort of your job really!" "Well, I know, I mean I've never known anything different, because that's the way I was brought up, wi' my dad being away. [...] Erm, and we were accustomed to our mothers, well, running the house all week, and er... I always say that [fishermen's wives] are quite a strong woman, because they've got to be mother and father. And if any crisis happens, well you've just got to deal with it, erm, and you just get accustomed to it. And you've also got to adapt if they are at home for a while, that erm... well that you've got ta consult them! [Laughing] I mean you're so accustomed to, you've got to try to remember to involve them, you're so accustomed to, I mean that sounds terrible!" *"No I see what you mean..."* "But you are so accustomed to making decisions, er and dealing wi' a crisis when it crops up and erm, that sometimes you forget when they are at home and you'll sorta... They sometimes tend to think that life should revolve around just them when they are at home, but it doesnae, because life... It's not so much [when they are] home when they are supposed, when you think that they're going to be home. [It's] when they are home unexpectedly and you've made plans for something else, you feel guilty because they're home and you've ta adapt for them being home."

Women in fishing households have to negotiate a balance between having an independent life while their husband is at sea, and being part of a partnership when he comes home. This temporary negotiation and renegotiation becomes part of normal life, happening each time the fisherman comes back from the sea. However, as will be seen later in the chapter, this renegotiation

of power and responsibility becomes more permanent and challenging when fishermen leave the industry altogether.

Being brought up in a fishing household had prepared Jill for the lifestyle that goes with being married to a fisherman. She had been socialised into the fishing industry by her mother and family and taught coping strategies for dealing with some of the negative aspects, like the worry that goes with your husband being out at sea in one of the most dangerous occupations. Those who are not from fishing backgrounds, like Roy's parents who were farmers, are not necessarily equipped with these coping mechanisms:

"And I remember when Roy first went ta sea, his mum and dad used to phone over and say 'it's a storm ken it's bad weather, any word of them?' And at that time there were nae phones so you could only hear them if they spoke on the radio, you could tune in ta them speaking on the radio. And that kinda started getting on my nerves because er we just kind of accepted that it was bad weather. But I said to them, I says 'but you only worry about it when it's a bad day in Cullen, what happens about when it's a bad day where they're fishing'? You don't know if it's a bad day where they're fishing. You've got to assume if it's a bad day in Cullen it could be a good day where they are fishing at, and you cannae worry every time there's a storm. I mean it's nae that you don't worry, but you cannae sorta drive yourself crazy because it's a wild day here. You've got ta just accept it really, because you cannae fight against it..."

Later in the interview Jill explained her strategy for dealing with worry and how she rationalises the risks her husband faces:

"And when he's getting ready to go away, do you get nervous about him going away, or is it fairly just part of life?" "No it's just part of life aye, no not at all. Nae even if it's bad. To let you understand, my husband had a serious accident [in the garden

and] he was off his work for more than a year, [...] and he was at home that day that he had that accident with bad weather, so... And [I knew someone] who was killed who was in a road accident going to Buckie because his boat had come loose in the harbour [...] and they were in with bad weather and he was killed in a road accident. So my belief is that when your time's up it doesnae matter whether you're out at sea in bad weather or whether you are sitting in your chair at home. So it doesnae bother me, I just, I believe that what's in front of you wont go past you as the saying goes up here. I mean, that sounds as if you do nae worry, but you do worry about them, but I just... I don't lose sleep worrying, overly worrying, I mean it's not... I mean when my son went to sea er, I worried about him. And that's a big change as well you see, long ago it was nearly all families that was in one boat. And there was a while when we had one of the boats and my brother and my husband and my son were all in the same boat, erm... And that is sometimes how quite a tragedy can sometimes strike one particular family if it's a boat wiped out. And that's changed in a big way because families are smaller and er so there's nae so much of that tie, close knit crew as there once was, it's a big difference as well, but... Aye you worry but you can't drive yourself silly worrying about it..."

Jill's worry increased when her son was on the boat with her husband and brother. Fishing history is littered with tragedies where the male side of families, and even communities, are lost at sea in a single accident. With smaller families and a greater reliance of crew from outside the immediate family this is less common, but was obviously a concern for Jill.

There is a Scottish saying 'a fisher laddie needs a fisher lassie', which refers partly to the physical work women used to contribute to the industry in terms of baiting lines, mending nets and processing fish, but also to the preparation women receive growing up in fishing households for the life they will lead. Women are socialised into the fishing industry and how it impacts on the

household as they grow up. This then provides them with the cultural resources to be successful fishermen's wives in the future:

"But you just adapt to it, I mean I've never known anything different. Er when we was first married, Roy was at home because he worked at the net factory, but then we werenae long married, about a couple of years married, when he went away to sea and I never thought anything of it. I didnae find it lonely, er because well you just... it's just all I've known. I think people who havenae been brought up, I know women who have married fishermen and have found it difficult because er they've never had to make decisions like that. They've sorta, if there's a crisis they've never had ta cope on their own and er, maybe their fathers had been at home all the time, I know they have found it difficult at times..."

As highlighted in Chapter 5, the majority of women who took part in this research had grown up in fishing households, or come from the local area where they came into contact with other fishing households. Only two had come "from away", and they spoke of the initial difficulties they faced in having to adapt to fishing life. The women who came from fishing backgrounds recognised this and felt they had an advantage having learnt how to be part of a fishing household as they grew up. To them, the knowledge of the patterns of fishing and how to manage the impacts they have on the household was part of their cultural repertoire. As Jill says, "it's just all I've known". Several people in this research used phrases such as "that's just the way it is" or "it's just all I've known" when describing women's roles in running the household or raising the children. This perhaps reflects a recognition that it may be seen as unusual, or even negative, by outsiders and is an attempt to reassert its normality. This is particularly clear in the quote below from Bill, who having left fishing is now working for the oil industry on a month-on month-off basis, and has experienced a different lifestyle structure:

"My wife will maybe speak to you when she gets back, but obviously as a result of the intensity of the fishing that I was involved [with] at the time, with me working trips I was away for six, seven days at a time, home for two. And if you are a skipper or owner of the boat your days at home aren't spent sitting at home in the house. It's always like, I'm not saying, in retrospect it's a bad thing like, but my wife totally brought up our children like. That was one of the things that made me leave the fishing as well, at the time my daughters were still finishing up at school, so I got a couple of years with them before they left, that was probably the best couple of years of my life like. But that was just the way we lived. Well most families in this area lived like that. The wife, it's total teamwork like. I went out and earned the money and brought it back and my wife totally ran this house. So like the bank book of the house, it was my wife's. And she brought up the kids. And it's not like a detrimental thing, that's just the way life was. And obviously my wife has had her struggles, we've all had our struggles as well, when you don't know any better it's just what it is, like aye."

Bill's statement is quite contradictory, on the one hand he says that not spending much time with his children was part of the reason why he left fishing, but on the other he says that not playing a greater part in their upbringing was not negative and just part of life. He is complimentary about and respectful towards his wife and her central role in bringing up their children, as were all the fishermen in this research. But, having gained some distance from fishing by being employed in the oil industry and not being solely reliant on fishing for identity, he recognises that being a fisherman has meant he missed out on things that shore-based fathers are able to do.

In the same way that Jill learnt the life of fishing households through her upbringing, the industry has played a large part in her children's lives. Jill stayed at home to run the household and bring up their three children until

they had all gone to secondary school. The children grew up in the patterns of fishing with Roy going away to, and coming home from, the sea:

“And the children, that’s all they’ve ever known too. And you enjoy the time [he’s] at home and you try to do things when they are at home, but you have ta, you’ve ta make a life for them not being there as well. Because like if you was going away, I mean I’ve had to take the children away on holiday, aye just in this country, because their dad wasnae home and maybe he’s joined us later on or something like that. But you’ve got to do things with your children, you cannae just fall apart cos dad cannae get home sorta thing. And you’ve just got to get on with it and you just kinda accept it. And it’s just life! [Laughing]”

As well as the sometimes difficult impacts of fishing on the household, the children also took part in the more enjoyable celebrations. When Roy’s new boats were built, the whole family took part in the naming ceremonies and their daughters launched the boats. Jill proudly showed me a photograph from the mantelpiece of the whole family, dressed in their Sunday best, at the first launch: “Aye, here’s [the girls] here, they launched the boat, oh [they were] just chuffed to bits, it’s a big occasion, it’s like a wedding”. Their son had spent a large part of his childhood learning the ropes on the boat and had gone into the industry with his father. Through the life that they led and the direct work they contributed, the whole family had enabled Roy and the boat to go to sea. As is discussed later, the impacts of the changes in the industry and selling the boat in 2003 reverberated through the whole family.

As well as women learning how to be a fisherman’s wife through the household, boys become involved in the family boat and much of their spare time is spent helping out on the boat. George, a retired skipper, remembers spending time on the family boat.

“The other thing is, when we were younger there was a real pride in your family boat, even when you were their size [pointing at his

grandchildren]. Every Saturday morning you were down and helping. And that's gone as well, but maybe that would have went anyway. I think if a family boat was in the harbour, there was always somebody down, ken there was like pride, which has gone."

Like other fishermen in this research, Arthur from Macduff spoke about spending much of his school holidays on his father's boat and told me proudly: "For my 13th birthday I got a set a oilskins and a pair a rubber boots and a knife!"

However, with the insecurities in the industry discussed in the previous chapter, some parents are concerned whether encouraging young family members into fishing is a good idea, as Joyce from Fraserburgh states:

"My nephew has just turned 16 and gone away on his first trip. And well my husband was home that trip but the skipper that took him was pleased with him and he really liked it, and the skipper was real pleased with him. And he wants to come onto my husband's boat. And he's a real hard worker and keen to learn and he's my nephew and I would like him to come onto the boat. But then again I would feel guilty if he came aboard at 16 and we could only give him a few years, and at maybe 19, 20 if there's no industry left I've robbed that boy of going and getting an apprenticeship of some kind because he went aboard and by the time he's 20 it's a bit late. That worries me in a way. Then again, maybe, hopefully it's the best thing I could have done for him. It's just something I'll have to bear if it happens I suppose."

The role of the household in producing the next generation of fishermen is questioned by concerns over the future of the industry.

The fishing boats on this part of the coast have shifted from weekly fishing patterns, usually from Sunday night to Thursday or Friday, to more intensive

'tripping' where boats spend between seven to ten days at sea with little time onshore in between. Where boats are running with extra crew onshore, it means individuals can do two trips on the boat and spend the following trip onshore. This change has happened gradually over the last 30 years. Fishermen suggested a variety of causes for this, including fishing further afield and increasing fuel prices making it more efficient to make less frequent but longer trips. This has meant that the time fishermen spend at home has decreased and become less regular, and this has impacted on women's roles:

"And you get, well, you go to weddings on your own because your husband's not at home because of the tripping. Long ago they would of made an effort, but things have become so difficult and financially you can't just decide 'oh well we've got a wedding this week so we cant go away because we've got this wedding'..."
"Yeah." "Er, they try to work it in, but if they cannae work it in, and it's just... And they also made the decision that unless it was erm, like nearest and dearest they wouldnae come in especially for a funeral, because erm, well life goes on... Latterly, the boats go round the clock, and I'm sure Roy told you that they have extra crew, and they have some crew at sea and some crew at home, to give, so that the boat was still going but so that the men have some time off as well..."

Women's role as representing the household has increased as fishermen are unable to be at home for family occasions. The increase in trip length and changes from a set weekly pattern to more variable trips also impacts on women's day-to-day running of the household, as Kate, also from Cullen, highlights:

"What's it like adjusting to your husband going away and coming back, I guess you are just used to it by now?" "I'm just so used to it. I think it's different now from what it used to be, because when we first got married Peter used to go away on a Sunday night and he would be home on a Thursday night or into Friday morning,

and you always had that weekend. And you had this routine that on a Monday you did your washing and your ironing and you washed your windows so that everything was planned out really for them coming home at the weekend. But that routine has so changed, because their way of work, the fishing has changed, and it now goes into trips. As he says, if he does eight days comes in and lands and goes and does another eight days, so it could be 16 days before I see him, or 17 days, so obviously the routine is totally different from what it was before, but it's just a way of life."

As is discussed below, the impacts of changes in the fishery extend beyond fishermen's work at sea and women have had to adapt to their husband's new working patterns. Although this has brought negative consequences, such as not seeing their husbands for longer periods of time, they have assimilated these new circumstances in to their existing roles. These changes have become part and parcel of being part of a fishing household, as Kate states "it's just a way of life".

Women are responsible for the financial management for the household, which is further complicated by the nature of fishing as an occupation:

"So in terms of running the household, do you, were you sort of in charge of sorting out the bills and that sort of thing?" "Oh aye, oh very much so. Roy just leaves, well, I'm fortunate and I suppose a lot of other wives are fortunate as well, he just hands over his wages when he comes home and trusts me to put money into the bank if I've got any money to pay into the bank, to pay the bills. And yep as far as that's concerned I run the house aye. He earns the money, I spend it! Lovely combination! [Laughing] And if you want something and you can't afford it well we just don't get it. If we want something we either have to save for it if we have nae got the money but erm... I'm nae saying everybody's like that because I know they're not! Some people spend, spend, spend

and I think that a lot of women who werenae accustomed to being at fishing didn't know how to budget, ken. They've got a lot of money handed to them one week and they'd have spent it and then next week, well where's the money coming from to buy the food kind of thing. And of course you've also to realise that some of them well, they dinnae pay tax every week, there is a scheme that they can go into or they got ta set money aside for it, the money you are getting is nae taxed. So that's difficult for some people as well, they forget that they've got tax to take off of their money which is quite a shock for them. And of course if the weather is bad and you don't get to sea or the boat breaks down well you just dinnae get any money! Which again is difficult for some women..."

As the income received from fishing is based on the catch and market value, it can be highly variable. Women in fishing households must be prepared to budget to take account of potentially poor trips and have the financial competence to manage this variable income. Jill repeats a point she makes earlier about the advantage she has of knowing and understanding what it means to run a fishing household, and how women who do not 'know' may struggle. As well as there being 'good fishermen', defined by knowledge, success, a well-maintained boat and good crew, there are 'good fishermen's wives', who display competence at running the household. Jill is obviously aware that some women do not perform appropriately as 'good fishermen's wives' and are not able to run the household finances efficiently. The management and presentation of the home can also be seen as a visible sign of the ability to perform well. In the process of this research I was struck by the way every home I went to was so carefully looked after and managed. They were also all presented in similar ways, with the importance of the family and the boat represented in photos, paintings and models in every home.

Alongside the longer-term support women provide that enables fishermen to go to sea through running the household and raising children, they also contribute to each trip. As highlighted in Chapter 2, in generations past,

women in Scottish fishing households performed much of the physical labour that was essential to the running of the boat. They were central to the preparation of nets and lines, responsible for much of the processing and marketing of the catch, and in some cases physically carried their men out to the boats so the fishermen's feet stayed dry. Technology has since developed and these aspects of the industry have become less labour intensive or are no longer part of the household's role in the production process. Women's physical contribution to the industry has declined, and they have become distanced from the catch. However, women, particularly skipper's wives, still provide a vital administrative support service while their husband is out at sea:

"So while your husband was out, while he had his own boat, things like, how often would he contact you while he was away, or did you have to do jobs like pick up bits of equipment...?"

"Sometimes, aye sometimes, but usually it would be the office that they would contact for that. When they got phones on the boat they used to phone quite regularly if they were in range, but if they were outta range, well it's just it. But we've got in the navigation, aye the satellite navigation, and we could contact them through the computer, which was handy. You can still keep in touch. And aye they'd maybe phone and say 'oh we're coming in to Shetland can you get in contact with the oil man', especially if it was the weekend and the office was closed, 'can you get in contact with the oil man and make sure he puts down oil' and stuff like that. So aye sometimes you had to do a bit of phoning and things but... well it's just what you do, it's just life. Anything you can do to sort of help them make their life a bit easier."

At the end of this quote Jill states that the work she does toward the boat is "just life", again normalising parts of the fishing lifestyle that may seem unusual to outsiders. Women's household labour also directly contributes to fishermen going to sea:

"And when he's then getting ready to go away again, are you sort of in charge of getting his kit ready and that?" "Oh of course aye! [Laughing] Yes, well I mean, if he needs wellies or gloves or knives or things like that he gets that kinda stuff for himself. But all his washing and putting his stuff back in the bag yes, I do all that, yes definitely, as I'm sure most other women do! That's just part and parcel, I mean it's nothing compared to what my granny used to do. My granny had ten surviving children, she had seven sons and how many of them went to sea... one, two, Uncle Alistair, Uncle Findlay, aye... I've forgotten an uncle! Aye she had six sons went to sea, and my granny and them had to mend the nets and everything, so we've got it cushy as far as that's concerned! And we've got automatic washing machines and tumble driers if the weather's not good for getting clothes dried. Nothing to complain about at all. She always used to tell me she never went to bed the same day as she got up, and she was the first one to get a washing machine when electric came to the village she just thought it was such a luxury!" *"I bet!"* "And we just cannae imagine things like that, so I've got nothing to complain about!"

Jill, along with other participants in this research, constructs her work toward the boat in comparison with women in the past. This is done in such a way that does not devalue the contribution of modern women, but shows respect for the physical work done by previous generations. As technologies have developed the tasks women contribute to the fishing enterprise and household have changed. However, as identities can be fluid, women are able to maintain their identity of contributing to their husband's work while the nature of the tasks they do has changed.

Individual women have different levels of involvement with the family boat and the industry. Some women had little direct involvement in the business beyond the occasional request to make a phone call or place an order. Others were in charge of the accounts, or ran errands for their husband on a

regular basis. A few women had much greater involvement and were more active partners in the business and decision-making. These women had a high level of knowledge of fisheries management, attended meetings about fishing and were more confident discussing the issues facing the industry. However the work of fishing still remained very much the fisherman's realm, as illustrated by the way Roy prepares his own gloves and knives used each trip, and Jill prepares his clothes. Women constructed their role in the business as largely supportive, as an extension of their caring role rather than as an occupational identity in their own right. As Jill stated above, she does "Anything you can do to sort of help them make their life a bit easier".

The patterns of each fishing trip structure life in the household. As part of Jill's performance of 'a good fisherman's wife' she prepares a welcoming home for her husband to come back to:

"And so sort of thinking about an average trip, which there probably isn't one! But if you knew they were coming in on the Monday night sort of thing, and if you were expecting Roy home, would you be getting the house ready and that sort of thing, or is it fairly sort of... normal? Do you know what I mean?" "Aye I know what you mean. Well my mum used to tell me, when I first got married and Roy first went to sea and things, that she always tried to be dressed nice and have us nice and the house nice for dad coming home. So I always tried to do the same, but then you kind of get into the habit that that's kind of how you are all the time, do you know what I mean? Erm, but aye you make a special effort. If he's coming home and he's been away fa maybe eight, ten days then you try to think, well we usually have fish when he comes home because Roy loves fish. But if it wasnae fish that he liked you would make what you thought he was keen on. Or if he phoned you would say 'is there anything special you want for your tea tonight' to make them feel welcome coming home, you know what I mean?" *"Yeah."* "When [the children] were younger, well I used to bake quite a lot. And I always had home bakes for him

coming home, er, but now your eating habits are different, you know, long ago. God, 'long ago', it makes it sound ancient! [Laughing] [...] But aye you sorta make a special effort for him coming home. And because they are always tired the first day in at home, he usually falls asleep on the settee. He sleeps better on the settee than he does up in his bed, so he will nae go to his bed when he comes home, unless they've come from the west coast, and they've driven home through the night. But aye you sorta try and make seem as if you are glad that they are home because they've been away for so long and you make a special effort usually. And if he was coming home on a night that I maybe had something arranged, er, and it was nae very important, I would cancel it [and] just stay at home because he was coming home."

As well as physical preparations for Roy's return, Jill also performs emotional work to make Roy feel welcome back in the home. Both husbands and wives recognise women's independence and capability while their husband is at sea. However, wives work to ensure that their husband feels welcomed back into the home and that they still have a place in the household. As part of being a fisherman's wife, women must use their independence flexibly, being capable while their husband is away, but prepared to waiver some independence to return to a partnership when their husband is home.

As well as preparing a welcome for Roy, she also has to be prepared that he may be home early or not for as long as planned:

"And so then would he usually be at home for a few days or...?"

"Aye usually, well [in the past], usually about maybe two, three days. But now he usually would be home just for one, depending on how things have been going. If they have been broken down, ken, it all depends. There's nae sorta like a set pattern, that's the thing that is difficult for people who like a routine, cos there's nae

really a routine. You can plan things and you think you've got everything well planned and then [snaps fingers] it's about."

As discussed in the previous chapter, successful fishermen need to be flexible and able to adapt to the progression of each trip to maximise their return. Similarly, fishermen's wives must be flexible and able to respond to the circumstances of each fishing trip. They must be able to balance this flexibility with maintaining the stability of a shore-based life for themselves and their children.

Although it has been difficult for the whole family that Roy sold his boat, it has meant less work to do toward the boat between trips, giving them more time together as a family:

"And now that he's on someone else's boat, is there less to do in his time off?" "Well aye, because when he came home he used to have to go to the office, to settle up, to get the men's wages, well how much was coming off with their expenses and things. And then maybe he would have to go down to the shipyard if there was repairs to be done. And then he used to have to go and order the stores and things like that. So I mean no, when he's home [now] that's him. But when it's your own boat it's a totally different ballgame. It's like having, well it's like if you work in any business and it's your own business. Just because the rest of the workforce is at home it's still your business, you've got to look after it. So no there's no pressure at all now, just totally different."

A fisherman's time, especially a skipper's, is not always his own when he is home from sea, and the work to be done while onshore has increased due to the changes described in the previous chapter. As is discussed below, the impacts of changes in the work worlds of fishermen extend beyond the domain of the sea to impact upon the private world of fishing, the household.

7.2.2 Summary

Women are at the centre of fishing households and their work enables men to go to sea. They are responsible for the day-to-day running of the household and must deal with any problems that arise while their husband is at sea. Women manage the household finances, a task made more complex by the variable nature of fishing incomes. They are responsible for the majority of childcare and bringing up their children. Women also contribute directly to the family boat, through their household labour washing and caring for their husband in preparation for and on return from fishing, and through tasks such as running errands or doing the accounts. Fishermen's wives are constructed as strong, capable, independent and adaptable. As technology in the fishery and the home has developed, the tasks they carry out have changed. Today's wives are constructed with reference to and in contrast with the fishermen's wives of the past, reflecting the intense physical labour previous generations contributed without devaluing the work women do now. Although contributing to the fishery both indirectly and directly, women's work toward the boat is constructed as supportive, an extension of their caring role rather than as an occupational identity in its own right.

Women have to balance their independence and responsibility of running what is effectively a single-parent household while the fisherman is at sea, with ensuring that their husband has a place in the household to return to. This involves both physical labour in preparing the house and food, and emotional work in making sure the fisherman feels welcome and needed when he returns home. As the patterns of fishing have changed, women have had to take on greater responsibility as their husbands spend less time onshore. They have also had to become more flexible, as the trip patterns have become more variable. Women must balance the creation of a stable life for themselves and their children while the fisherman is at sea, with being prepared to change plans to welcome him home should a trip be cut short.

Women learn the coping strategies and resources needed to behave appropriately as a fisherman's wife through their upbringing in a fishing

household. In the same way, their children are impacted upon by the fishing lifestyle and are socialised in how to behave as they grow up. Those who do not come from a fishing family do not have these resources and have more to learn if they are to succeed in the industry. These resources include coping strategies to deal with the worry of their husband, and perhaps brothers and sons, being out at sea. Whilst recognising that fishing creates challenges for all those in the household, the differences are normalised as 'just part of life' in defence of potential critiques from outsiders.

7.3 Stress and pressure brought back to the household

The changing nature of men's work discussed in the previous chapter has implications for the household. The increase in regulation and crew problems have increased the work skippers have to do toward the boat when they are onshore. Several wives spoke of the amount of time their husbands spent either at the fish selling offices or on the phone trying to source quota or days at sea. This eats into the time they would previously have spent as a family. The stress and pressure fishermen are under is brought home with them and impacts upon women as wives and carers. As James, a retired fisherman from Lossiemouth, suggests, this adds to their worries:

"But in the last wee while, I know from some of the fishermen's wives, the terrible concern. I mean, when men were away at sea and you hear a storm and you wonder about them. But the anxieties of law and regulation and courts and everything has been very hard on the womenfolk with young men at sea this last while. [...] These wives of these young skippers have suffered very badly."

Women provide emotional support for their husbands, and as fishermen struggle with their work, women's worry for and the emotional support they provide to their husband also increases. Below, Katrina and Joyce (underlined) talk about Katrina's husband Ben who has his own boat. After an

accident a year ago, the boat required extensive repairs and they wondered whether they could survive financially:

“The worry has been horrendous. It’s been a year to this week, and the pressure it puts on family life. My husband’s health I would say has suffered, sleep wise, that’s the thing he worries now, constantly worries.” “I would say for all the time I’ve kenned Ben, as a person there has been a dramatic change over these past 18 months I would say. He’s just got so much stress. I think he’s aye, he lives on a knife’s edge. So he’s worried in case he goes back out there again and something else goes wrong with the vessel or ken? I have seen an awful big change... Aye it’s a lot of worry, he’s a nervous wreck...”

Women have to support their husbands through increasingly difficult times. These pressures impact upon personal relationships and can cause difficulties within the family. Richard, who has now left the industry, talks about how he dealt with the pressure he was under and how this caused arguments at home:

“And another thing, we’ve never really had a row have we, we’re nae ones for rowing anyway. But I mean sometimes when you was away at the fishing, because you were away for say two weeks, dying to get home, and then you get down to that bar and just get blitzed, and by morning the state you were in, you’d probably start arguing about something silly, but now I mean we sit through there [in the sitting room], socialise.”

Alongside their worry for their husbands, women are concerned about the changes in the industry. Although not directly employed in the industry, women have a large stake in the future of the fishing industry. The increase in regulation causes them anger and worry, as Beth states:

“The other thing is, aye they’ve so much rules and regulations now they’ve got to, if they’re going to come to harbour, to land their fish, but it’s outwith landing hours, they’ve got to phone in for permission, right? I remember this one time, and it was just a storm, and he phoned Edinburgh and said ‘I’m coming in ken’, and he says ‘it was a *lassie* that says to *me*, no you’ve got three hours before you can come in!’ So he says to her, ‘you’re sitting there in a fine comfortable office, and we’re just about loosing our lives, no way ken!’ But they were breaking a regulation for that, and I’m sure they got a letter in about it ken? But aye it’s *stupid* things like that ken? But er, aye, I have been suffering with high blood pressures it’s true enough! [Laughing] And I think it’s all the stresses and strains... [...] So erm... I mean, we’ve weathered storms and it began to, when they put in the quota system it was a bit tough. But I would say this past, I would say since they’ve started decommissioning and that, we have really been restricted, erm, I thought it, I felt really victimised at one point in time, like aye.”

The stresses of regulation do not just impact on the fishermen, but are a source of worry for women too. Beth also spoke of having to deal with registered mail arriving at their home which contained court summons relating to Jamie’s fishing activity. Beth and Jamie had the added worry of having their son on board the boat and so Jamie was also responsible for their household’s financial security.

“If he’s positive, I’m positive ken? Because I’ve had every faith in him. But I was a bit worried at the beginning of this year, I thought no if this lean continues, I was quite worried ken. And my daughter-in-law said to me, erm, because they were struggling some weeks to get a pay, and she says to me ‘oh I hope things change for the better ken’, and I said ‘through all my years I have been married, I would say that I didnae feel, I didn’t admit this to Jamie but I’ll admit this to you, that I didnae feel so negative about

the fishing'. I had always seen it in a positive light, but at the beginning of this year I thought oh ken, I dinnae ken what was going to happen."

Beth suggests that, despite her concerns over the future of the industry, she remained positive for Jamie's sake, supporting him to carry on in the industry.

Alongside the worry and increase in emotional support, women have found it difficult to maintain the routines of the household. Returning to Richard and Laura, with Richard under increasing pressure and with less time between trips, their time at home together became more precious but also fraught with tension. Laura found it more difficult to be able to create opportunities for them to do things as a family, even going on a shopping trip, as problems with the boat spilled into Richard's time at home. The frustration Laura felt, still there two years after Richard had left the sea, came through as she described the situation:

"Well [...] say he was coming home on the Thursday or whatever, and I maybe needed shopping on the Tuesday. And I would think 'oh I'll just wait til he comes home'. And then you kinda found that you were doing quite a lot of 'just waiting til Richard came home'. And then by the time he did come home you were forgetting that he was in his bed all day because he was shattered. And you was itching for him to get up and come on because we need to go and do this or we need to do that. And then by the time you looked about the van was there and the boat was ready to go back to sea again, and you still hadn't time for, you had one night out or whatever, but er, I mean we just got on with it. I didnae really think... I suppose it was just really something I thought we could all do together. But then nine out of ten you'd get a call from one of the crew anyway and I'd say 'well you'd better go down yourself and I'll sort this out'." "It was just life."

Both Richard (underlined) and Laura suggested this was just something else they had had to get used to, "It was just life". Now Richard is working outside the fishing industry, he is under less pressure and relations have relaxed at home.

In Jill and Roy's household the problems they were facing led to them deciding to sell their boat in 2003. Below Jill emotionally describes her mixed feelings about this. On the one hand she was sad to see the family boat go, but on the other relieved as it had been the cause of her husband's distress:

"It's horrible, horrible, it's like when that... we went down when our boat sailed out, when they took it away from Fraserburgh, and it was just... It's hard to explain, when she went outta, and it was dark when she went outta Fraserburgh, and it was just... it was like part of your life had gone and... and when you've been in business for a certain length of time it's difficult to adapt to not being your own boss and my husband I think thought that he'd been kind of like a failure. That's the thing I think a lot of them kinda feel, they feel as if they have let down their families and it's not their fault, it's different if it had been your own fault, you can kind of accept it. And they've struggled and ... and it's... it's destroying, I mean there's men have landed up in the, the er, it's nae right to say mental hospitals but you know what I mean?" "Yes." "Er, they've had breakdowns and everything because of this, and it's... it's horrible to watch... er, and that's how I felt my husband, I felt he was heading for a breakdown... just with everything... and fishermen tend ta... bottle up their feelings, they dinnae find it easy ta... ta express how they are feeling, and... he sorta bottled it all up and you just felt that he was just ready to snap... And you were glad that the boat was sold but you were upset because you knew that it wasnae what he wanted, you know what I mean?" "Yes..." "It's, it's... it's just awful, and they started off with such high hopes and dreams and... life's never what you think it's going to be, and I'm just so glad that they are

healthy and we've come out of this and we're not left in debt like, like a lot of them have been left in debt, which must be horrible for them, er, but... we're ok. [...] I couldn't have gone over to watch if it had been our boat bein' broken up... I just... I mean it's... it's just part of you..."

Jill's worry for her husband's health is clear. She felt that Roy was concerned that he was a failure for having to leave the industry and that he had let the family down by having to sell the boat. This is made worse by fishermen working in an industry where it is seen as inappropriate for them to express their emotions and concerns. The boat was obviously an important part of Jill's life, as it was for everyone in the household. Their daughters had launched it, their son worked on it, and all of their day-to-day activities enabled Roy to go out and be a fisherman. Jill was relieved that the boat had been sold rather than decommissioned and physically broken up. The continuing importance of the boat was displayed through the photographs and models around the home.

Women have had to deal with the changes in the fishery impacting upon their household. The pressure and stress their husbands are under has increased women's emotional work load as wives and carers. This adds to the concern for the future of the industry that they feel themselves. The pressure the fishermen are under has caused tensions in the household and strained relationships. It has also become more difficult for women to maintain household routines and the activities they planned to ensure the family spends time together when the fisherman is home.

7.4 Renegotiation of fishing households

Fishing households are structured around clear divisions of labour with the work husband and wives carry out forming the basis for their identity. While the fisherman is at sea, the wife has the responsibility for and control over the household and bringing up the children. As discussed in the first section of

this chapter, these positions are to some extent renegotiated on a temporary basis each time the fisherman returns home from the sea. In households where the boat is sold or decommissioned, these renegotiations become more permanent.

The process of adjustment to no longer being a skipper can be difficult, as was highlighted in the previous chapter with respect to the loss of status in the work world based on occupational identity. Bill, who in his mid 40s sold his boat and went to work in the oil industry. He found this process difficult. As he now works on a month-on month-off basis, he has taken on some of the household tasks his wife used to do:

“And even within the house, I’m the breadwinner and my wife’s the house-runner like, and all of a sudden the hierarchies just get flipped totally upside down, and there is a lot of things to get accustomed to.”

His wife Rachel had also recently taken on a full-time job, and so the roles in the household had completely changed.

Richard and Laura were particularly open about the processes of renegotiation they went through. Richard had been a fisherman all his working life until 2002 when he sold the boat and became self-employed as a manufacturer supplying specialist engine parts to the oil industry. Laura has worked part-time since their two now-teenage children started school. Laura recognised the challenge it would be settling down to having Richard (underlined) at home each night:

“But it was mair so when you gave up the fishing, I thought ‘oh god, oh god this is either going to be really good or really hard’. But I found it really quite hard for about the first I would say about the first six months, because he was in my space, my environment.” “And her side of the bed!” “Well the bed was

mine!" "Or so she says cos every time you go to bed she's got the whole bed from corner to corner!"

Laura had been used to having the physical space of the household to herself and found that it took a period of adjustment to get used to having Richard around the house. She has also been almost solely responsible for bringing up their two children, having Richard at home was a challenge for Laura and an opportunity for the children:

"But nae only that, just little wee things like that's when we find out where the problems are with the kids. Because I was always the one they say 'right mum can I get', or 'can we go', I would say 'yes' or 'no' or whatever. And then it was just like rebelling stage, typical teenage especially with the oldest one. And I would say 'no', and she would come right through here and say 'dad', and he would say 'aye ok then', so this is where I found it really quite... And it did take a lot of settling down to, and I thought 'no we're either together in this or this is not going to work', cos they were playing one another here, and they know that I'm always the bad one here, cos dad always said 'aye', and I thought this is not going to work, but..."

Richard had always been able to be the parent who spoilt the children when he came home from the sea. Now he was home on a long-term basis Richard and Laura had to renegotiate their roles to work more as a team. They also had to work out what was expected of each other at home:

"Just coming home every night and having meals ready every night. Just whereas we would maybe take something out of the freezer, and I'd think 'god I'm going to have to cook every night ken'?! And then..." "You didnae put a lot of thought in to it then eh?!" [Laughing] "Like pasta's nice and quick, 20 minutes in the pan a drop of sauce, Bob's your uncle!!" "Well no, but when you first gave it up it was proper meals." "Aye but I wasnae looking for

proper meals.” “Well you didnae say that! [Laughing] But you learn.”

Laura suggests that she felt Richard was expecting her to change the way she would have run the household while he was away, to perform more domestic tasks to look after him. She felt that in some ways she had lost some of her independence by having to consider Richard's needs everyday, rather than just when he was home from the sea:

“But no even just on, ken just like sitting at night, it was my telly I could watch what I wanted to watch, or go where I wanted to go or have friends over, and you think ‘oh well I cannae have all my friends over tonight cos Richard’s at home, what’s he gonna want?’ But that took a bit of getting used to being back in just the life of having him at home all the time.”

Richard had a lot to learn about how the household functioned and how Laura liked her household run:

“I mean you never did interfere when you did come haem or anything like that, cos it was just this is my space, you’re interfering with it. Or I would maybe go and do something and he would be at my back. Making dinner or something like that, and he would be making the mince something different from what I would do or... Just little things like that, you think this is my kitchen, but you did kind of get out of that easy enough.” “I was just interested because I was never used to being at home and I was just watching what goes on and stuff, but now...”

This adjustment period has now passed and Richard and Laura have renegotiated their roles in the household:

“But then, now I think it’s great because I know he’s home every night, and I can just open the door and go and nae be thinking but

there's nobody to watch the kids or whatever because I know he's here. So my life has kind of exploded out of here really."

Although Laura had led an independent life while Richard was fishing, she had always been responsible for childcare. Having Richard at home full-time has given her an increased freedom from these responsibilities.

The distinct identities around which the fishing household is based are called into question when the fisherman leaves the industry and is at home for extended periods of time. The balances of power and responsibility have to be renegotiated, in a way similar to when the fisherman comes home from a fishing trip, but on a more permanent basis. This requires a longer period of adjustment, where the fisherman learns more about how the household is run and both husband and wife establish what is expected of them. For fishermen there can be a sense of loss of identity as the 'bread-winner' as they become more involved in the household tasks. For women there can also be a sense of lost identity and invasion of their space as they are no longer in charge of the whole household and responsible for the childcare. However, as Laura describes above, this can also be a boost to independence as they now have someone to share these responsibilities with.

7.5 Discussion

Households are the private world of fishing, and although not an exclusively female domain, women are at the centre of these households. Fishermen's wives are constructed as strong, capable, independent and adaptable. While their husband is at sea they must take responsibility for running the household and bringing up the children. Women are generally socialised into this role through their upbringing, learning how to perform as a 'good fisherman's wife' and the strategies to deal with the complexities of the fishing life. The independence that is required of women while their husbands are away has to be carefully balanced with ensuring the fishermen feel welcomed home and that they too have an important place in the household.

Fishermen's wives need to be flexible, and prepared to adapt their plans for changes in the fishing trip. It is through the household that the next generation of fishermen and wives learn the knowledge needed to perform successfully. Women in fishing households also perform labour that contributes to the running of the family boat. This is constructed as an extension of their role as supporters of their husband, rather than as working directly in the industry.

However women, and the household more broadly, do have a large stake in the industry, and the changes described in the previous chapter impact upon their lives and identities. Fishermen's wives are performing an increasing amount of emotional work to support their husbands through the difficulties they are facing. The stress and pressure that fishermen are under is brought home to the household and can cause tensions in personal relations. The changes in fishermen's working patterns, with less time and more issues to deal with when on-shore, interrupts the routines women have and the things they have planned to ensure they spend time as a family.

When the household is no longer active in the industry, the temporary negotiations of household identities that occurred at the end of each trip become more permanent. Fishermen can have their status as bread-winner challenged as they spend more time in the household. For women having their husbands in 'their space' can reduce their identity and source of power as the household managers. However, once the initial period of adjustment is passed, a more permanent partnership that is beneficial to both can be reached.

8 The ‘Community’

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8.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the way in which people connected to the fishing industry construct and use the concept of a ‘fishing community’. As discussed in Chapter 2, notions of community are used in identity work to construct and express collective identities. Ideas of ‘fishing communities’ were frequently brought to life through the words and conversations of people in this research. They were used primarily in a past tense, to construct idealised ‘times gone by’ in contrast to the places where they now live and work. Additionally the present day was assessed against the standards of the past to gauge whether their current situation could still be described as a ‘fishing community’.

The idea of a ‘fishing community’ can be understood as an identity-expressing symbol. It is used to express belonging to collective identities based on fishing and place, and to mark these identities as different from non-fishing people and places. Understanding and belonging to a ‘fishing community’ is part of collective and individual fishing identity. Its structures are familiar to those who belong and provide a way of understanding the current period of change.

This domain of fishing identity is the public domain, where fishing and its associated identities are visible and performed to those who are part of the

'fishing community' and those outside it. While talking about their understandings of 'fishing communities' the participants in this research identified a collection of symbols that make up a 'fishing community'. Individual descriptions of the places where they live and work coalesced around key themes which occurred in all of the interviews. At the heart of all these ideas is the harbour and the role it plays physically, economically and culturally in defining a place as a 'fishing community'. As Jack from Buckie neatly summed up after our interview:

"I couldnae imagine not living by the sea. I mean without a harbour, what's the centre of your community?"

This chapter explores what happens as these components of a 'fishing community' are changed, removed or undermined, and the impact this has on the construction and performance of fishing identity.

8.2 Boats in the harbour

A key characteristic of a 'fishing community', as defined by the people in this research, is an active harbour used by the fishing fleet. When asked how places have changed, it was generally the loss of boats from the harbour that first came to mind. The presence of fishing boats is an outward, easily-read sign that the place is an active 'fishing community'. When the number of boats using a harbour declines it impacts upon the economy, both around the harbour and in the towns. Alongside this economic impact, there is a symbolic impact. As the number of boats physically present in the harbour declines it illustrates the decline of the place as a 'fishing community' and of the industry more generally. This reinforces the growing negativity toward the industry felt by some fishermen who see the loss of crew and lack of new entrants discussed in Chapter 6 as a sign of decline.

As discussed in Chapter 3, fishing activity has concentrated in the largest harbours of Fraserburgh and Peterhead, leaving the smaller harbours with

only occasional visits from the off-shore fleet. Buckie's harbour has seen fewer fishing boats using it as their main harbour as activity concentrates in Fraserburgh, Peterhead and along the west coast of Scotland. Buckie also used to have a large inshore fleet going to and from the harbour daily, working just out in the Moray Firth. However the grounds here have become so depleted of stocks that there are very few boats still working and using Buckie in this way. The capacity to fill a harbour with the home fleet was frequently brought up with fond memory of times gone by.

Before fishermen began to work intensive trip patterns, there were specific times when the whole fleet came in to harbour, such as to land for Friday morning market, or to take their summer or Christmas breaks. At these times the true size of the local fleet could be seen, and they are remembered fondly by people I interviewed as a spectacle to be beheld, as Peter who is in his 40s and from just down the coast in Cullen, describes:

"And Buckie there, Buckie on a Friday and Saturday night it was traffic jams, aye before, the harbour was full you could walk from one side, the boats was moored up from one end of the harbour, so you could walk from one end of the harbour to the other on them ken?"

This notion of the boats filling the basins of the harbour came up time and time again. Jill, also from Cullen and of a similar age, remembers the same sight from her childhood:

"Buckie, when we were young in the summertime when the boats all tied up to get their refits and things, you coulda walked from one pier to another without touching the water, just boat to boat!"

Now the harbour is much quieter and used on a daily or weekly basis by much fewer boats. However, local boats do use it on certain occasions and when the fleet is in it demonstrates Buckie's continuing connection to the fishing industry and, for the people I interviewed, its identity as a fishing community.

For example, Buckie is the nearest large harbour for Adam who lives in the village of Portknockie. He fishes for a mixture of whitefish and prawns, working from and landing into Fraserburgh or Peterhead:

“So Buckie, I mean would you still consider Buckie to be a fishing community?” “Aye there is see, well ken, Buckie is like our settling office, it’s where we do all our business, and aye it is. There’s a lot of boats from Buckie still, but they never come up because of the fishing grounds, ken. You get a bit of a fleet in with the squid fishery in the summer and that helps Buckie. But at Christmas the boats come up to Buckie because they are tied up for a fortnight just for ease, it’s easier for maintaining your boat and running over to it. So there is still a fleet, but even then there’s nae the boats there used to be before. [...] So Buckie has been hit in terms of numbers, but they’re hardly ever in Buckie because of the job of getting to Buckie, with the price of fuel and everything. You used to get boats that would land in Peterhead on a Thursday night and would steam back up to Buckie and sail from Buckie on a Sunday night, just so they could work on the boat, but because of the cost of fuel it’s nae longer an option like. So there’s still a fleet, but in numbers I wouldnae like to say, it’s probably 25% of what it was 25 year ago. When I started at the sea Buckie was full of boats every weekend and it’s just 25 year and it’s a big, big difference. But you do see it at Christmas, there is still a fishing fleet.”

Although coming back to Buckie at Christmas is framed in terms of ease and economics, it also serves as a symbolic reassertion of Buckie as a fishing community (see Plate 5.8). Several participants mentioned the pleasure and pride of seeing the boats at home at this time.

Above Adam mentions the squid fishery in the Buckie area. When I first interviewed Adam two years earlier in 2003, he excitedly told me about seeing a small fleet of boats working out in the Moray Firth:

“But it’s funny I dinnae ken if you have noticed, it’s the first time in my life I’ve ever seen it. See out here just off Portknockie, there’s a fleet, well last night there was a fleet of about ten boats just fishing half a mile off the beach ken. I was faxing a boat saying ‘you’ve gone too far this week, half a mile off Portknockie!’ And I was speaking to some of them and they were fishing for squid, and it’s the first time I’ve seen them this close. And it’s good to see the small boats back in port, but I dinnae think we’ll do that, ken. It’s different gear, you would have to change, and it’s a one-off, it’s nae something I envisage to see every week, ken? Pity like but!”

This was the first year that there had been enough squid in the Moray Firth to make it viable for a fleet of boats to work there. It turned out that it was not just a one-off, the squid have returned each summer since then, and some of the larger boats have joined the inshore boats as squid is not restricted by quota or included in their allocated days at sea. The squid were landed into Buckie and as there is no market here anymore (an issue returned to below) transferred to Fraserburgh market by road destined for mainland Europe. This fishery has been important for bringing boats back into Buckie harbour and at night the lights of the boats fishing out in the Moray Firth join the flame from the Beatrice oil platform, seen from homes along the coast.

In Lossiemouth, as the fleet developed and began to target fishing grounds further afield, the local harbour was also used less and less by the fishing fleet. The largest basin in the centre of the town has been redeveloped into a marina for yachts and pleasure boats. This has been a source of conflict for local fishermen who see it as an inappropriate use of a fishing harbour, yet preferable to it going to ruin. James, a retired skipper who has lived in Lossiemouth all his life, eloquently describes the changes in the town and harbour:

“It’s very sad to see a way of life die. The town of Lossie here, when I was young, every road led to the harbour. Everybody’s

work involved on-shore offshore season whether it was fishermen, whether it was boat building, the whole cycle of ancillary trades, and now it's gone, just practically gone. Thankfully we haven't a derelict harbour because that's agonising, but we have in a sense because it's now a yacht marina, but it's a sad situation from the bustle of work and life that I knew. You could liken it to a mining town when a pit closes down, people have to move away, older people can't and stay, the lifeblood and direction and ambitiousness and progressiveness goes out of the area and people in the area, and young people have to make changes and leave home. So it's a very different community today from what I grew up in."

The comparison James makes with mining communities is interesting. The harbour is understood in a similar way to the above-ground workings found at the pit heads of mining towns. It is a visible, physical symbol that forms the focus for a town that distinguishes it as a place based on fishing. James goes on to explain the loss of the home fleet at Lossiemouth:

"Lossie used to have 90 boats, sometimes we couldn't take all the boats home, we'd have to leave them in lochs and canals because there was no room." *"So when did the numbers drop to now?"* "The rapid end decline has been in the last ten years. 20 years ago we still had a good steady fleet, home and away in other fisheries. We realised that the town and the market, well we had an inshore fishery here in the Moray Firth but we could see that that was overfished, so really we had to develop marketing centres. Aberdeen or Peterhead, Lochinver or Mallaig. That happened in its own way, that was natural to happen. But we still had a little home fleet as well, fishing for prawns. Ten years ago it was beginning to crumble, and we can hardly believe what has gone in the last ten years. Nobody could have said it would come to this."

When I interviewed Charlie in 2003, another retired skipper from Lossie, he took great pride in showing me some video footage of the harbour in the 1920s, when it was packed out with fishing boats and fishermen, including some of his relatives. Afterwards he described the loss of boats in the town which, unlike James above, he saw as more due to fishermen leaving the industry completely rather than working from the larger harbours:

“Now, all that we’ve got in Lossiemouth is eight boats, it’s all we’ve got left is eight boats, and with this decommissioning we might have less, that’s all we’ve got now. And at that age you saw in the film there, we had about 500 fishermen in Lossiemouth and 90 boats. About 11 year ago we had about 50 or 60 boats. From the 1960s was a boom fishing time, then gradually the men just seemed not to want to go to sea. People were getting older and retiring and selling their boats, and over the ten year [with] these decommissioning schemes, just got out. But there was nae the money at that time with the decommissioning, they just got rid of the boats and got out with dignity instead of debt I suppose. Just lost interest in the fishing I suppose, the younger lads just didnae seem to want to go [to sea].”

Charlie went on to talk about the change from the harbour to a marina:

“We were against it at the start, you know, ‘you’re not turning that into a marina, it’s a harbour’. But the harbour company had to do it, and it’s better that than it going to ruin. And they built those flats in what used to be the stores.”

Lossiemouth harbour is now a site of leisure and relaxation as opposed to the bustle of work and industry in the film that Charlie showed me. Along with the main basin being full of pleasure yachts, the stores along one pier of the harbour, built up on stilts to allow the waves to break underneath them, have been converted into flats (see Plate 5.10). The larger stores opposite have been converted into ‘The Harbour Tearooms’, a café decked out in maritime

themed objects, and 'The Harbour Shoppie' and 'Harbour Treasures', gift shops both selling model fishing boats, lighthouses and other maritime-memorabilia to visitors (see Plate 5.11). The last space in this row of buildings is occupied by the 'Lossiemouth Community and Fishing Museum'. Several of the retired fishermen from Lossie are involved in the management of the museum and volunteer as staff. However, it is understood by some, such as Stuart who decommissioned his boat in 2002, as a sad situation that their livelihood has gone from being the centre of economic activity to an exhibit in a museum:

"I dinnae ken how many boats is left now, and that's before, I mean a lot's been offered decommissioning now. I don't know what will be left here at the end of the year [2003]. I don't know how many boats there was years ago, but we're probably only just into double figures now. If you go into the museum, you'll see the photos and they're all the way across the harbour, but even thinking back, thinking back there was decommissioning in 1993-4 when I got my boat, and that was when they wiped out the likes of Lossie. I mean my uncle got his prawn boat decommissioned then, that was really the first cut. That wiped out the likes of Lossie and took away everything here, and we were only left with one boat or a couple of boats that were left going. And then decommissioning again last year, it just decimated Peterhead. And this next lot will really put the nail in the coffin if they do away with the boats that have been offered decommissioning. [...] It's just something to go and look at in the museum really, the fishing community, I would say. It's sad, but it's just the way it's gone."

Fraserburgh, at the eastern end of my research area, has also experienced a loss of whitefish boats from its harbour. This has, however, been somewhat disguised by the presence of the pelagic and prawn fleets based here, and the way in which vessels from all along the coast have concentrated to Fraserburgh and Peterhead harbours. Walking around Fraserburgh harbour it is still clearly a fishing harbour and so, according to participants of this

research, a 'fishing community'. When the boats are in, the huge pelagic boats dominate the harbour at the west end (see Plate 5.2), with the smaller inshore boats around the edges of the centre basins, and the whitefish boats towards the east end (see Plate 5.1). Fishing vessels support the full range of ancillary services around the harbour, which as will be seen below are also central to maintaining 'fishing community' status. However, the number of boats has fallen with 23 Fraserburgh registered whitefish boats decommissioned in 2003 alone, along with other whitefish boats registered to other harbours but using Fraserburgh. There is also a widespread fear that the prawn fleet will soon be the target of a stricter management regime, and concern over how the pelagic fleet are using and contributing to the harbour differently from other boats, as Jamie explains:

"So how has Fraserburgh changed?" [Long exhale] "Fraserburgh is a fishing port, going way back, and in the early 90s even, this place was just bustling. See down the harbour, there's a wee bit of activity with the prawn fleet here, it hasn't been hit as much as other ports, but och this place was just, it was exciting ken. [...] But er... [it's] definitely had a down turn, but it looks like it might be on the up again. Because it's never been purely whitefish here, you'll see that down the harbour, there's a big pelagic side in Fraserburgh, and they're massive, so that kind of keeps the Broch going in itself. But they dinnae deal with the small suppliers and the small service industries. They're all self-contained with their own engineers and do all the small jobs themselves, and any big jobs they're over to Norway. And of course there's the prawn side as well, but it doesnae look so rosy for them just now, with the fisheries officers clamping down on them, which is nae a bad thing, but..."

The physical presence of boats within a harbour is an important signifier of a 'fishing community'. However, their symbolic presence, being owned by local people but working from harbours elsewhere, is perhaps also key to maintaining the identity of 'fishing communities'. The smaller villages along

the coast have had similar experiences to Lossiemouth, with their harbours becoming impractical for use by modern fishing vessels. There are still a number of vessels owned by people from these places and these continue to be counted as local boats, and part of the 'fishing community', even though they never come back to their home ports. These small harbours are now used for mooring pleasure craft, though not to the extent that Lossiemouth is, and for small fishing operations, as Richard describes with respect to Hopeman:

"There's still a few boats left here, but they are all spread out from the east to west coasts. [...] And down in the harbour now its just pleasure craft really, a few guys that do lobsters sort of part time through the summer."

The locally owned boats, however far away they work, are still important to maintaining a sense of 'fishing community' identity. Even though they had decommissioned their own boat in 2002 and now had little to do with the industry, when I interviewed Richard with his wife Laura, they went on to count the local boats, past and present, and were able to name each vessel, who owned it, where they now fished from or when they left the industry. As discussed in Chapter 6, skippers are identified by other fishermen and women in relation to their boats. This knowledge of boat histories and social relations is only known by those with strong links to the industry and forms part of their fishing identities.

Moving east along the coast, Portknockie is also no longer used by modern fishing boats, but several skippers and fishermen live there. Here the heritage and tourism potential of the fishing industry is being promoted by the village and local authority, with large signs as you approach the village stating "Welcome to Portknockie, 'Aye Afloat', Historic Fishing Village" and floral displays around the village built into old boats and creels (see Plate 5.6). However, as Adam a skipper who has lived in Portknockie for 25 years describes, the fishing industry is not solely a heritage exhibit here, that

maintaining boats owned in the community keeps it alive as an active 'fishing community':

"And would you describe [Portknockie] as a fishing community?"

"Aye... aye there is still a group, but it's very, just hanging in the balance I would say. [...] There are four or five boats in Portknockie now [...] There's nae, aye if the fishing stopped tomorrow, it would impact, you're speaking smaller numbers but it's a smaller village, but I would say it's gone down 25% from the amount of boats and skippers that used to be in Portknockie."

"Because I was trying to work out what makes a fishing community, does it still have to have a fleet of boats, or is it the history, and whether somewhere like Lossie that doesn't have any fishing boats in it's harbour, whether that's still a fishing community, or whether it's the people, I don't really know?"

"Aye... well I think heritage is a big thing now, it's maybe that I'm getting old that I think that! When I was a young lad [I thought] 'oh heritage isn't anything', but you do think more of it. Ken it attracts visitors, and I think they'll always be known as fishing communities all these coastal villages, I think it will. Like all the houses, like our old house was purposely built for the fishing with lofts for taking the nets up, so they'll always be. But I ken what you mean, if there was no fishing boats... it would die, aye like speaking about it. Although there's not a lot of boats left, I think it was last year Portknockie had a fishing week like, and it was like a gala week with a fishing theme and it was a great success, and I think they're planning to do it again... but I just wonder if there was no boats if they would still do that sort of thing, like as the years go by, all the folk that set up the gala had connections to the fishing, but as the years go by it might dwindle... I think they'll always be known as [fishing communities], cos there's two or three of the walks tells you the heritage of the town and the visitors like to see it, so I think it will always be portrayed as that just to attract the tourists."

Boats physically present in the harbour are a material expression of a place as a 'fishing community'. Memories from times past when whole harbours were full are treasured by the people I spoke with. Today, with boats working from harbours away from their home ports and the total number of boats in the fleet reduced, these sights are rarely repeated. In places such as Lossiemouth the fishing fleet has been replaced by pleasure craft and tourism, and the visible connection to the industry is not as clear. Boats in the harbour are a symbol of a 'fishing community' that can be seen by both those within the fishing industry and outsiders. Those with strong connections to the industry also construct the local ownership of fishing boats that work from other harbours as maintaining a place's status as a 'fishing community'. However this knowledge is only understood by those within the industry.

8.3 Fishermen in the community

As well as a loss of boats from the harbours, participants in this research raised concerns over the loss of fishermen from the towns and villages. Having fishermen living in a place is understood as an embodiment of the fishing identity of that place. With the presence of boats in harbours declining, the connection to the industry is maintained through the fishermen who still live there. But as the number of active fishermen declines, 'fishing community' status is difficult to maintain.

Jill, who has lived in Cullen all her life, finds the decline in the number of fishermen there quite dramatic, and thought that this shifted the village away from being a 'fishing community':

"And what about Cullen as a town, how have you seen that change, I mean it's not got the fishing harbour, but was there much fishing employment here before..." "Well you see, I would nae like to say, when [my husband] first started going to sea there must have been dozens a skippers in Cullen, and dozens a boat owners in Cullen, which in turn employed the crew. And now er

there would be, let me see, there's ...one, two, three, four... there would be about four skippers in Cullen... I would say there's just about four. Well unless you count the little boats, but the one's who actually employ anybody, I would think there's four or five skippers in Cullen as opposed to when [my husband] first started going to sea there must have been dozens. So it's nae really a fishing... er fishing community, whereas before, I mean every second man would have been a fisherman, erm so as far as that's concerned aye big changes. [...] I suppose you would be lucky to get a dozen fishermen outta Cullen now, which is really quite amazing I think."

As the number of fishermen and people associated with the industry declines, fishing falls from view within the community, and is no longer seen as central to these places. Richard from Hopeman, who decommissioned his boat in 2002, explains how fishing has become invisible:

"Since I've come out of the boat I've not had much to do with the fishing, and if I didn't know the guys I wouldn't think there was a fishing community here."

The presence of boats and fishermen within these places contributes to the socialisation of younger generations into the industry. As fishing slips from view it no longer surrounds young people at the centre of these places encouraging them to enter the industry, which contributes to the lack of new entrants discussed in Chapter 6. Charlie, a retired fisherman from Lossiemouth, describes the role played by the fishing industry in his life from an early age:

"Well going back to my time, we just knew we had to go to sea, following our fathers footsteps. Most of us, probably 90% of the boys leaving school at that time in Lossie went to the fishing with their fathers. Now gradually as time got on, fishermen in the 60s and 70s were making good money, more than what the lads

ashore were making, [but it is the] opposite way about now, expenses got that high that it was impossible to make a living. [...] When we left school we just made straight for the harbour, just sat watching people come in, we were there every night waiting for our father to come in, aboard the boats, we just loved boats, but they don't see that here now because there's no boats here, the boats from Lossie work the west coast or Peterhead."

Charlie remembers growing up surrounded by boats and fishermen, which encouraged and taught him about fishing. He is referring to at least 60 years ago, but others see the same patterns happening more recently. Stuart, a skipper from Lossiemouth who decommissioned his boat in 2002 and is in his late 30s, describes his daughter's class at school:

"Obviously, when I was at primary school there was, say in a class of 30, at least a third of them, their fathers would have been fishermen. Now my daughter's in a class of 30 at the same school and there's not one!! There's not one of them that has got a father that's a fisherman. That's probably your biggest... although Lossie has grown over the past 20 years, there's next to no fishermen left now."

Sarah, who teaches in a school in Buckie, says the same about her class:

"Like the school where I teach, out of about 25 in my class only three or four of their dads are at sea, whereas when I was at school everybody's dad went to sea, so I suppose when you look at it that way it's no longer a fishing community."

Fishermen are no longer the dominant occupational group in these places, and so the current generation are not growing up surrounded by or as immersed in the industry as they would have been in the past.

As fishermen slip from the centre of these places, occupational identity could be devalued. However, as Adam from Portknockie describes, others use it as an identification to be fought against and it strengthens their commitment to the industry:

“[T]his was a fishing village filled with fishermen and fishing wives ken, related with the industry ken? We’ve a wee paper, the Knocker, that you get just every month ken? And at the end of the month there was statistics and I was kinda shocked, I think there’s 36 fishermen in the village now, whereas afore there’d have been, I dinnae ken, two or three thousand!! But er, so the gradual decline of the fishing, folk have moved away mostly to the oil, so it’s nae like a factory closing with a big impact, it’s just frittered down to a small, aye I ken, gradually, so it’s nae had a big hit. But I can see it, there’s mair going on with the heritage of fishing now than there is with fishing ken?! It’s getting to that stage, ken there’s nae a lot of fishermen left, and folk have said ken, aye if they haven’t seen you for a while, and they say ‘are you still at the fishing’ and you say ‘aye’, they’re kinda shocked because they think it’s finished! In a lot of folk’s eyes it’s finished already ken? So it’s one of the things that makes me more determined to try harder, cos I enjoy it ken, and I can see it being sustainable.”

Fishermen living in a place are the embodiment of the idea of a ‘fishing community’ that can be maintained after the boats have gone. Participants recalled a time when “every second man would have been a fisherman” and how this provided important social functions in symbolising a place as a ‘fishing community’ and socialising the younger generations into the industry. However, fishing is no longer the dominant occupational group in some of these places and the reduction in the number of fishermen was highlighted by many participants. In some places fishing has slipped from public view entirely and the existence of a ‘fishing community’ within the wider community is only known about by those connected to the industry.

8.4 Active harbour and ancillary businesses

'Fishing community' identity is not simply made by the material presence of boats and fishermen, but the way these contribute economically and socially through the ancillary trades that support them. For many people in this research, building new boats at a harbour illustrates the continuing importance and development of the industry. New boats signify the relationship a place has with the industry and are a symbol of hope for the future. This is also demonstrated weekly through the celebratory reporting of new boats in 'Fishing News'.

Buckie once had three boat builders in its harbour. There is now just 'Buckie Shipyards' left, its enormous hanger-style workshops dominating one end of the harbour. Even with no competitors left locally, it has had to diversify from working with mainly fishing boats to a lucrative contract servicing the RNLI's fleet of rescue boats. It has recently had a new workshop built, including a cradle to carry the lifeboats across the road from the harbour to the new shed. However, for some, this raises similar sentiments to the change of use in Lossiemouth harbour. Although it is still active, which is important to fishing identity, it is no longer based on and supported by the industry, as Adam from Portknockie says:

"So how have you seen places like Buckie change?" "Oh in a big way, cos Buckie all along the harbour used to be full of offices and chandleries and engineers. We had three slips, and they all employed 50-100 men at one time. In the boom years ken they were building two or three boats a year, and now they dinnae build any fishing boats at all. That was the biggest change was the shipyards. There was three good shipyards and it was all fishing that they did, and the only shipyard left, and the only thing that's keeping him alive is the lifeboats, ken?"

In conversation after one of our interviews, Sue, from Lossiemouth, described how difficult it used to be trying to get space on the slips at the shipyard her

husband used. Annual repairs and repainting had to be booked well in advance. However, more recently they had been able to pick and choose their slot as the shipyard was much less busy. Although this was an advantage at the moment, she was concerned about how long the shipyard could remain in business and whether they would lose another ancillary service.

Alongside boat building, having a fish market, an ice factory and local processors are also considered important to the identity of a fishing harbour. As George describes with respect to Buckie:

“There was three shipyards down here, there’s one now, it hasn’t built a fishing boat for two years. They’re losing men all the time disappearing away to the oil, there’s just a small squad down there. The ice factory I reckon will be closed very shortly, and whenever the ice factory goes from a fishing port that’s the end of the fishing port. We had a new fish market built, must be about ten years ago, built to European standards, but there’s nae been a fish in there, it’ll be six years in October, there’s nae been a fish in it. They built that market, and even in them days there was a trend to work in Fraserburgh, Peterhead, concentrating in different harbours, and now they’re speaking about storing potatoes and that in it from cargo, and that’s £1.4m of Brussels’ stupidity! So you’ve got that, and folk have been affected, the whole community has been affected by the reduction in boats, men can go and work in the oil, but the actual businesses in Buckie have just disappeared. There’s two or three local processors, one’s taking in a lot of fish from Faeroe, another’s working smoking salmon, and they’re all farmed salmon, the other one is doing a very much reduced processing [of] scallops. There’s nae a processor left really.”

Buckie has seen an increase in shipping of timber and other cargo, with one end of the harbour next to the former fish market used exclusively for this

purpose. Similar to the shipyard becoming dependent on lifeboats as opposed to fishing, it seems inappropriate to George that a brand new fish market should be used for storing general cargo. These changes, along with local processors working with fish that has not been supplied from the local boats, are not necessarily visible to those outside the industry. The factories are still there and the harbour is still in use, but the significance of the shift from the local fishing industry is only understood by those directly connected to it.

For most fishermen, although economics are obviously and increasingly a priority, there is also a desire to support local businesses around the harbour. Because of the role that boat building plays for them in making a place a 'fishing community', this is especially true with respect to having a new boat commissioned. Bill, who has now left the industry, describes the way in which he felt it was important to have his last boat built locally:

"From saying we were going for this boat, we went down to the shipyard, it was Jones' shipyard in Buckie here that built it, and that was very, very important to me. When we went to go out for tender, there was one shipyard in Fraserburgh and two Buckie yards tendered for the boat, and I'm not sentimental at all about things like that, but I felt it was quite important for me myself, because it's a major thing within the town like aye the building of a boat like that, and to keep it [in Buckie], I set out that unless the Fraserburgh tender had been miles less than the Buckie tender I was going to come to Buckie to build my boat like aye. Because that's one of the, that boat was, if it wasn't the last wooden boat I think it was the second from last wooden boat, to be built in Buckie, and that's one of the saddest things for me out of the whole thing, I hadn't actually realised the skill that went into building a wooden boat. And there's absolutely no one in Buckie that can build a wooden boat like that now, to the skill factor, because the men that did the, that built the boat, this shows you the builders [showing me photos] actually there's two guys that

actually single-handedly built the boat... But they've been lost now, there's no builders that can build with that skill, and although it seems like an incidental thing to the fishing, it's like a way of life that's been lost in that respect like. It's good in a way that everything moves on, steel's definitely the thing of choice, but it's sad to see old skills like that being lost like."

It is obviously distressing to Bill to see skills disappearing from the industry in general and from Buckie in particular. He saw his boat, one of the last wooden boats built in Buckie, as the end of an era with the loss of skills that he felt were valuable and part of what made Buckie a successful 'fishing community'.

The businesses around the harbours not only support the industry in a practical sense, in the day-to-day running of boats, but they have also served as sites for apprenticeships for young men considering going into the industry. Here they become not only technically competent in net making or engineering, but are socialised into the industry, learning how to perform as fishermen and begin to build up their social networks. For example, when Jack from Buckie, who is now a skipper with his own boat, left school at 15 he went straight to a net manufacturers at the harbour to learn skills that would be used when he left for the sea. This net company has since closed. Jamie from Fraserburgh had a similar experience:

"Initially I wasn't going to go to the fishing. I was going to be, I was pretty good at technical drawing and I was going to try and be an architect. But I don't know something happened when I was about 14 years old, it finished and I stopped going to school, just I had to go to sea. But my father, he wouldn't let me go aboard the boat til I learned, I had to go into the local net store, learnt to make nets and do net repairs and stuff like that, then he took me to sea. So that was why it was that I left the school at 14. I shouldn't have been allowed to, but because I got a job in the

net place it was ok, and then when I turned 16, I went aboard with my father. And I've been fishing ever since."

The ancillary services around the harbour therefore provide an important source of learning and introduction to the fishing industry. These businesses can also be used by fishermen as they near the end of their careers. Jamie's father, for example, has been working in a net store since he 'retired' from the sea. A 'fishing community' is made up of more than the people and boats, and is also constructed around local skills and knowledges which are housed in the ancillary businesses that support the industry. As these businesses decline, these skills and sites of learning may be lost.

The loss of boats from a harbour and the pressure this places on the businesses that provide services to the boats, not only reflects the visual decline of the industry and removes potential sources of work, but also makes it more difficult for individuals to run their boats. As Jack from Buckie, explains:

"And there's so little boats now, I think the whitefish boats are down to about 170 boats, the likes a, erm take for instance Peterhead, there was maybe 400 boats in Peterhead five years ago. Now if there was four engineering businesses they all maybe had a 100 boats each and the net makers had 100 boats each and on from there, now it was survival of the fittest of them four engineering firms so maybe one survived and he's pushing his prices up so high there's nothing you can do about it, so you are getting squeezed fa both sides, you know what I mean?"

These problems further the sense that the fishermen who are left are working in an industry that is in decline.

The ancillary businesses that support the fishing boats perform a variety of services beyond their obvious functional role. Their success, or at the very least survival, illustrates the performance of the fishing fleet. This is

particularly true for shipyards where the new boats, so celebrated in the industry, are built. These businesses are also stores of local knowledge and skills, which are passed on through apprenticeships which socialise young generations into the industry. Fishermen in this research recognised the importance of these businesses and made an effort to support them. However, with a declining fleet, many were struggling to survive and were turning to other industries to support them. These changes may go unnoticed to those outside the fishing industry, but to those who are aware of the shifting functions of these services it illustrates the decline of the industry and undermines a place's identification as a 'fishing community'.

8.5 Money in towns

Fishing has traditionally been seen as the mainstay of not just the harbour and its surrounding businesses, but also the towns in which they were based. Although usually physically separate, with the harbour down at sea level and the towns 'up the brae' on the cliff tops, their fortunes have been inextricably linked. The boats drove the economy in and around the harbours and the pay the fishermen received from the boats drove the economies up in the towns. As Katherine from Fraserburgh said: "When the fishing's good, everyone gets a share, but when it's bad..."

8.5.1 Spending as performance

Fishermen and their wives were renowned locally for their ability to spend money, and the pleasure they seemed to get from having material items. This was frequently suggested about fishing families from Fraserburgh and Peterhead, although always by people from elsewhere! When I asked Jill from Cullen whether she had seen any changes in Fraserburgh she said:

"And [fishermen] were very affluent. You see they always say that farmers, when they make money they dinnae spend money,

they're tight. But fishermen, and their wives!! [Laughing] Spend money and like ta hae nice things, erm... like to be dressed nice, but... Down there [Fraserburgh and Peterhead] I mean you're bound to have seen about the baby bonnets with the big brims and the ribbons, it all started down that way, the lacy covers and the prams and things. And to a certain extent some of it still goes on but, nae nearly so much as it used to be." *"Someone was saying about the weddings and they used to be big affairs..."* "Oh aye, very showy down there, very very showy."

However, as the relative prosperity in the industry has declined, respondents referred to a fall in the level of consumer spending and this has impacted upon the economies of the towns. When I asked what she thought the future for these places might be, Kate from Cullen described the scene in Fraserburgh and Peterhead:

"Well I think their economy is going to be badly affected, because there's one thing that's always been true of fishermen, if they've earned money they spent it, and that's a fact. Nobody spent better than them, especially in Peterhead and the Broch there was a lot of competition in those two towns, so a lot of people have nae got sympathy for the fishermen because they portrayed an image possibly that was just over the top. And now the money's nae coming in, so it's nae being spent, so it's nae going through the local economy. The shops are closing down, the Broch and Peterhead are full a charity shops, there just is nae... There used to be nice shops, but then there was the money going into the towns at that time, if the money's nae there it will affect their economy badly I would say, and it'll probably force people to move away from the areas to look for different kinds of work."

Spending and conspicuous consumption has been part of the performance of fishing identity. Although these fishing families liked to spend money, as Kate says above, it was money they had earned. It can be seen as well-earned

rewards for the hard work they had put in. Within the industry some people understood and respected this as appropriate behaviour, however those looking in from outside saw their spending as extravagant. Being able to buy things was a visible sign of success, as everything was bought with money that people had earned rather than on credit. This has changed, as Jack explains as we talk about Buckie:

"Someone was telling me about like big fishing family weddings, and when there was a baby born in the family they'd have massive Silvercross prams and there'd be all sorts of things, that it really was a quite wealthy place..." "Aye, oh aye it was a wealthy place aye ken. At that time you see [...] this is just my views, but I think [...] a lad could drive by in a fancy car, 25 year ago they'd say 'he's doing ok, he must be doing ok', cos people were more scared of debt then. If you had something you spent it and you bought it, erm... If you were doing well and you fancied a new car, you went to Cornhills. You saved up your money you went to a garage and you bought it. But people now, there's nae the same fear of debt now, people'll go and they'll sign on the dotted line and they'll have, ok maybe it's 25% of their wages or a certain percent of their wages to buy that car which they dinnae need but they feel that they need it, so they think oh we'll have it, can we have it, aye, oh we'll have it, see what I mean? [...] I dinnae ken how to explain it, people just aren't as scared of debt now. [...] Whereas before, you went you worked, you made your money, you lived by your means and you bought what you needed and bought what you wanted, whichever way your working life was going. But here I suppose, 25 year ago you saw a lad who bought a boat and then two or three years later he bought a car and you thought he must be doing alright ken?"

Spending was part of the performance of being 'a good fisherman', it was a visible performance that could be read by others as symbolising hard work and successful fishing. It could also be seen as a barometer of collective

success, of the industry and the 'fishing communities'. However, according to Jack, this is no longer possible as the moral objection to buying goods on credit is not so strong, and consumption is no longer an indicator of earnings.

8.5.2 Fishing as the backbone of the local economy

Not only were fishermen spending money that they had worked hard for, they also recognised the important contribution they made to the local economy. In a way similar to Bill who commissioned his boat locally, many fishermen thought it important to buy their boat's stores in local shops. Adam and I were discussing how much fishing is left in Portknockie, and he was saying how shocked he had been to see that there were only 36 fishermen left in the village:

"But to still have 36 fishermen around here it's still important, you know it's still, if it went completely from here..." Aye well, in the village now I think there's just four boats, whereas before there'd have been 44 ken? You'll maybe have seen it in the lobby, we've got a picture of Portknockie long ago and the harbour's just full of boats, it's unbelievable how far down it's gone. But part of what you're saying, we take our groceries from the local supermarket and we try and ken support the village, so it would have an effect ken if the four boats was to go awa' tomorrow, it would affect them ken?"

Although much reduced, Adam sees fishing as still important to supporting the local economy. In the quote above, Adam makes reference to a picture of Portknockie harbour. Several of the households who took part in this research had similar pictures of their local harbour full of boats either displayed on the walls or looked them out from the photo albums to show me. The successful times of the past were held in high regard, and these pictures reinforce the points made at the beginning of this chapter of the importance of having boats in the harbours.

There is fear among some of the people that took part in this research that fishing boats from other European countries will begin to use the harbours along the Moray Firth. These fishermen are constructed as 'others' in contrast to local fishermen who are supportive of the local economy, as George from Buckie states:

"If we don't take control of our own waters there will be very little fishing for local people. And even if the French and Spanish come in they bring everything from home, they won't benefit the town. They just use the harbour as a parking lot. Even if we are fishing out of Peterhead we try and order stores from the butcher and baker here. The infrastructure will go."

As discussed above, the active fishing industry in Lossiemouth and Buckie has declined over time as fishermen began to use Fraserburgh, Peterhead and other ports more heavily. Participants in this research suggested that Fraserburgh has suffered more directly from the impacts of the recent restructuring of the industry, as Adam from Portknockie explains:

"Well, ken Buckie's different, ken it's happened over the last 20 year, ken? This big fleet of boats, when I first started ken, they started frittering then, ken 20 year ago, even when the fishing was viable. [...] I would say the Buckie fleet has declined gradually over a 20 year period. Whereas Fraserburgh was a different fleet, they were building new boats, and I think that's half the reason why it's happened so quick with them. Most of the boats down at Fraserburgh ken were new and investing, and it was the quotas that really brought everybody down. With them dropping rapidly it was becoming unviable and they were under financial pressure so, it's really just the five, ten year that their fleet's declined. And it has had an impact in their economy, because you drive through Fraserburgh now, ken afore it was bustling and now 20% of the shops are boarded up ken having to close and it's nae a good thing to see. It's like a ghost town. [...] Ken they are feeling it a

lot harder because there was a bigger percentage and it's happened quicker ken? So it has had a major effect in that corner. [...] Ken you see the difference in the town, ken unemployment's higher, shops are closing and the industry's shutting down, people were dependent, like they were nothing to do with fishing, like the shops, but they've had to shut down because there isn't the money going about the town. So it has affected them mair."

The changes in Fraserburgh were seen as happening rapidly. Store closures and the increase in the number of charity shops were seen as symptomatic of the state of the local economy and so the fishing industry on which it is based. Brian, who is in his 30s and has lived in Fraserburgh all his life, sees similar changes as Adam above:

"How have you seen Fraserburgh change?" "I would say drastically over the last three, four, five years, definitely seen it change drastically. There's just not the same money now. If you just walk up the high street now, half the shops is boarded up the other half is charity shops, it's just resembling a bit of a ghost town at the moment. And if things get much worse it's certainly not going to get any better, so I think the community has definitely suffered, compared to what it was."

At the time of my interviews in 2003 the latest decommissioning scheme was in progress. There were real fears that this would impact heavily on Fraserburgh, as Paul from Buckie suggests:

"That's something people don't seem to realise, the fishing is the backbone of places like this. When the fishing goes down, obviously everything around the harbour goes down, there's less money being spent in shops in the town, it has a really bad knock on effect. I suppose it's like mining communities or whatever. I've seen it in the few years I've been in Buckie. And this batch of

decommissioning is gonna have big effects, Fraserburgh and Peterhead, I hear them saying things are a lot quieter since the last lot and there's a lot of small businesses closing down, it's not just a few fishing boats out of the fleet it's big knock on effects for the whole community."

Fraserburgh was frequently referred to as a "ghost town" and again there are comparisons with mining towns. The boarded up shops, loss of local services and increase in charity shops are seen as a sign of decline. Where fishing was once, as Paul states above, "the backbone of places like this", it is no longer able to support them. For some, Fraserburgh was seen as in a process of terminal decline, becoming a "ghost town" with nothing to replace the support once received from the fishing industry.

One particular development within Fraserburgh that was frequently brought up by participants, often after interviews, was a growing drug misuse problem. It was suggested by some that drug dealers specifically targeted Fraserburgh as there were wealthy young men with time on their hands, but that it has now spread through much of the younger generation, as Jill from Cullen explains:

"Nowadays of course the drugs and things that are in Peterhead and Fraserburgh, it's quite disturbing I find..." *"Do you know why it's like that?"* "Well they targeted, the drug dealers came up and targeted that area because they knew that, see there's [pelagic] fishing down there which is bigger again and they do earn lots of money, you're speaking maybe the crew getting £40,000 a year, a lot of money, so they were targeting [them]. When we were young, even just as far back as ten years ago, all the boys down there when they got their licences they had all spanking new cars. But now it's sorta old bangers because a lot of them are involved in the drugs."

Other participants, such as Jamie below, suggested that the reason for the availability of drugs in Fraserburgh was not related directly to the fishing:

“But I think drugs is happening all over the country, it’s global, it’s nae just up here.”

As discussed in Chapter 6, the problem of drug use amongst young men is compounding the problems of maintaining a stable crew. The perceived increase in drug use was constructed by participants as an indicator of economic decline and symptomatic of a place where income and employment opportunities were unstable. Fraserburgh was described as place with economic and social problems and an uncertain future, as Katrina states:

“I mean Fraserburgh here, it’s as though we are set in a rut and we just cannae make headway.”

8.5.3 Broader social and economic changes

For some people, the changes in their local economies are less to do with the fishing industry directly and more to do with general changes in shopping habits and markets, as Arthur explains about Macduff:

“If you go down the main street we’ve nae got a butchers shop. They’ve all closed because [of] the big stores, Somerfields and Tesco’s. There used to be five butchers shops in Macduff, now there’s one, no there’s none, there used to be four or five bakers shops, there’s one, they’re speaking about closing down the Post Office. So basically the main street there will be nothing, nothing, couple of clothes shops, a paper shop...”

James, a retired fisherman who has lived in Lossiemouth all his life, also sees the challenge to small towns by supermarkets as part of the reason for the decline of the shops here. For James, Lossiemouth has in some respects been fortunate to have an alternative source of income in the RAF:

"In Lossie, we have [an RAF] base, and it's probably the busiest air station in the country. There's thousands of personnel there, and there are jobs related to that, but not too many, and not at all highly paid, but nevertheless it's jobs. So the area, not the town so much, the area very much benefits from the RAF stations in Moray. But even supermarket changes, we all go to Elgin to ASDA and Tescos, they're just so big with the price reductions. But when I was a young man Lossie was a self-contained town. I've seen the bakers, and there were many, the bakers that were supplying bread to the boats at the weekend to go to sea the back of Sunday, the town was self-sufficient, in every way of provisions. [...] But the self-sufficiency has gone to a great extent, has gone down to the supermarket way, the same as every rural area. It's another point that hurts little places. You might think Lossie looks quite prosperous, it's maybe the RAF and the area is dominated by house prices. And some of them like the freedom and the way of life and the education and the space up here that after their service lives they retire up here, their parents come and retire. And there's a lot of young men that were fishermen that still live in these areas but are now offshore oil-related, so you're not seeing it like a ghost town maybe like a mining town would be as it closed. The town has a lot going for it with climate and area and amenities, in sailing and golfing and mountaineering and there's much going for it. So Lossie can be a dormitory town in many ways that it wasn't before, it was in a sense a working community in itself. So that's part of the changes, so you're not seeing the real ill effects of it as you would maybe think you should."

In contrast to the descriptions of Fraserburgh above, James does not see Lossiemouth as a "ghost town", as the economy is driven by new sources of income. However, he is obviously concerned that Lossiemouth has lost its "self-sufficiency", the independence that the fishing industry had provided the town.

James mentioned the way in which the oil industry is helping to maintain the economy of town, with former fishermen able to work away but remain in the town and economy. In other places where they do not have another major industry such as the RAF, the oil is particularly important, as Adam illustrates talking about Buckie:

“Well the whole town was dependent on [fishing], but everybody has diversified. I would say the bulk of fishermen that have left the sea have gone to the oil rigs, so they’re still in the economy up the brae, but down in the harbour it’s through the week it’s almost like a ghost town.”

The oil industry that has absorbed many of the former fishermen is now driving the economy of the towns, but unable to support the harbours. Fishing is no longer “the backbone” of these places, as Paul suggests with reference to his street in Buckie:

“I mean this street that we live in now used to be five of these houses used to be fishermen, I was the last. And now its oil, oil, oil, four or five of them depend on the oil industry. If it hadnae been for the oil this would be a ghost town already.”

Although the oil industry is now perceived as supporting Buckie's economy, Paul's wife Sarah raises concern over the long-term sustainability of dependence on this industry:

“Well I sort of shudder to think what will happen to Buckie if anything happens to the oil industry. You sort of imagine it being like somewhere like the northeast of England when the traditional industries closed down but I wouldn't like to think of that happening here, if the oil went we'd be in a bad way.”

Fishing is constructed as having been the main economic driver for the towns and villages along this coast. Spending and consumption have been central

to fishing identity, used to express hard work and success for individuals and collectively. Fishermen see themselves as having driven and sustained the economies by intentionally purchasing from local shops and services. Part of being 'a good fisherman' has been recognising your role in and supporting the local economy. However as the instability in the industry has increased, fishing is no longer the main driver for these economies and this understanding of fishing and fishermen at the heart of these places is difficult to maintain. In Fraserburgh there has been nothing to replace it and the town is constructed as a "ghost town", with boarded up shops, a drug problem and little hope for the future. In other places such as Lossiemouth and Buckie, the changes are understood as having wider causes, such as changes in shopping habits and the rise of supermarkets and other industries, such as the RAF and oil, are now driving their economies. Fishing is constructed as having once been economically at the centre of these places, but no longer able to provide, as one participant described it, the "self-sufficiency" of the past.

8.6 Social events

As the number of fishermen has declined and those that are left are working more intensively and under more financial pressure, social events that were previously an important part of the 'fishing community' have died out. In the past for example, the majority of fishermen and boats worked a weekly fishing pattern and did not fish on a Sunday which allowed them to observe the Sabbath. This meant that the fleet leaving harbour on a Sunday night became a social event in itself. Beth, who is in her 50s and has lived in Fraserburgh all her life, remembers going down to the harbour to see off the fleet, which included her future husband Jamie:

"Well the harbour was *full* of boats. And... aye, and it was, what we did when we was courting ken, me and Jamie, going out together, they used to sail, most of the boats didnae sail on Sundays, they still kept the Sabbath, ken? [...] We used to go

down on a Sunday night and watch the boats going out, because it was an *event*, I mean, and they all sailed at that time and it was great. You could like count the whitefish boats, nearly 200 of them. [...] Aye the harbour was just full of boats; you've really seen aye the change ken."

The majority of the fleet came back in to harbour to land their catch on a Friday, which generated another social occasion. The following extract comes from an interview with Adam from Portknockie, where we were talking about what people miss when they come out of fishing. He highlights the social life that goes along with the industry:

"But I think, they all say 'oh I still miss the fishing', maybe the social side, ken you were all in the weekends, not always in the pubs, but everybody asks how you got on in the week... Afore, ken the social side is also dwindling, but ken, Buckie on a Friday night, ken, everybody used to land on a Friday morning and there was a harbour café and they used to be *steering* the folk in there, and everybody would be going to the offices for their pay and going down to the pub..."

Along with the weekly sailing, Christmas was an important occasion in the fishing calendar. The whole fleet came back into harbour and tied up for a two week break. Christmas was associated with catching up with old friends and maintaining the social networks between fishermen that are hampered by being away at sea. This was facilitated through the 'Christmas Balls' that were organised by the various fish selling companies and agents all along the coast. Jack from Buckie who is in his early 30s, recalls the importance of these occasions for keeping in touch with other fishermen. For Jack the prosperity in the industry just ten years ago was reflected in the Christmas celebrations:

"And it was good times, it was really good times and [I] bide myself down to college, bought the house, erm, you could sense

a bit of prosperity, ken? Everybody was, ken, you had fishermen's balls at Christmas time and things that make the community, folk. The fishing, it's a funny thing, because you'll mebbe nae see a pal, he's on another boat and it's landing at a different time a you and you're missing him, and you'll mebbe nae see him for two or three month. Like I've got pals I've not seen since the back end of Christmas. But they'll all be in at Christmas, everybody comes haem at Christmas. So it just was a different time, it just, although it was only seven, eight years ago... it just... it just... feels like a different time..."

Jack went on to talk about looking through the old Buckie newspapers in the local library. The social events of the past bonded people together in common activities, in some sense of community:

"Erm, as you're going through the papers, they must have got like, I don't know the old money, something like two and six off their pay every week, and every few months they had a night out and the Buckie paper was always at the nights out. So [these] nights out, they seemed to have, although they are making a lot less, their money was worth a lot more, but they seemed to have a better life, ken? There seemed to be mair community, mair community involved anyway. And now, you'd nae find that in Buckie people, you'd maybe find it on a night like Christmas or something like that. The slip would of had two football teams, ken things like that ken?"

Social events or rituals, like Friday night landings and Christmas, provided the opportunity for people to come together and perform their collective 'fishing community' identity. As Jack suggests above, these occasions were deemed noteworthy enough to be covered by the local newspaper. These events were not just a celebration of Christmas or the whole fleet being together, they also celebrated the achievements of individual fishermen, as Beth from Fraserburgh recalls:

“Erm, there was mair, the offices, the offices had always dinners and dances at the end of the year. And they was usually giving trophies for the best fishermen ken, in the office and things like that. Well that’s all gone, yes. Changes... [...] That would have been maybe the best, there would have been a trophy for who was the best fishermen in that office, sailing from there, or it could have been the port, but er...”

These Christmas events were also an opportunity for women to socialise and for the wives of fishermen from the same boats to get to know each other if they were not local, as Richard (underlined) and Laura from Hopeman describe:

“[When you had a stable crew] did you know the wives?” “Oh aye.” “Oh aye, well the majority of them were local anyway. [...] But we all knew one another, aye if it was local people. But if you got anyone out of Peterhead or down the coast or anything then no. We would just get used to their voice on the telephone and, but you did thingy up a friendship with some of them if they were there for long enough, but that was just the initial phone calls, we never met up with them or things. But at the latter end we didnae have any like ‘Christmas dos’ or...” “All these things stopped years and years ago, even when maybe the first five year I had the boat, there was regular Christmas what we call ‘dos’, a Christmas dance or something, but after that it just sort of petered away to nothing, people didn’t bother, but nae really that, it was the expense.” “It was the expense more than anything else.” “Trying to cater for everybody and with the running costs getting higher people just started stopping.”

Richard and Laura suggest that the events they used to attend died out because of cost. In some places there are still events held around Christmas time, but they are no longer *fishing* celebrations. As Adam describes the New Year dance at Portknockie you get the sense that it is no longer a fishing

based event, and that the fishermen, although they are still using it as an opportunity to maintain their social networks, are just a small group within the larger social gathering:

“[A]t Christmas time there was dances, ken? Every office had a dance, all that’s kinda dwindled ken. Although ken like in our village at New Year there’s a dance, it’s a family thing like, but the fishers usually congregate to hear news and that kinda thing, but aye it’s quieter...”

Fishing is also no longer at the heart of everyday social events like an evening down at the pub. George, a retired skipper from Buckie, describes the difference now that fishermen are no longer the dominant occupational group:

“Years ago if you went out in company, you had five or six couples going out, everyone was fishing. Now when you go out I sit there and say nothing, everyone else is involved with oil, eh? Whereas before it was nice, the fishing craic was always there, it’s that type of job, it never, never leaves you, weekends and that; it was a great satisfying job. But now I’m sat there and it’s oil rigs and working time directives and working this on and that off and I just cannae relate to that.”

George expresses a feeling of exclusion, of no longer being able to relate to or take part in the social relationships that he, as a successful skipper, would once have been at the centre of.

Many of the participants in this research described taking part in social events based on the fishing industry, such as around the weekly sailings and parties at Christmas time. These events were more than social occasions. They were sites of performance of fishing identities and an expression of ‘fishing community’. These events celebrated the success of individuals, the local fleet and the prosperity in the industry as a whole. They were also places where social relations were built and maintained between fishermen’s wives,

and the sharing of knowledge between fishermen occurred. However, as the number of active fishermen has declined and those that are left are feeling under financial pressure, these fishing based events have died out. Now fishing is no longer at the centre of social occasions and some fishermen feel a sense of isolation within broader social relations.

8.7 'Incomers' and the dilution of 'fishing communities'

Not only is the number of fishermen in places along the coast declining, but there has been an increase of people moving into the area from elsewhere and other occupational groups are becoming the main sources of employment. For the people who took part in this research, this changes the feel of communities, removing fishing from the centre of town life and making the 'fishing community' less visible.

The influx of people moving into the area, especially into smaller settlements like Cullen, is changing the social make-up of these places. Traditionally everyone in a 'fishing community' is known; their histories, families and how they relate to one another, is commonly shared knowledge. When people move in from outside without connections to the area they are not part of the social map of the 'fishing community' and cannot be placed within existing relationships. As Jill, who has lived in Cullen all her life, explained:

"And [there has been] big changes in Cullen as a community because we have a lot of incomers [laughing because I am an 'incomer' to Cullen]. I've no objections, but that's what you are always termed as! So there again, going from walkin' down the street and knowing everybody, I mean, you know people but you dinnae know their backgrounds if you know what I mean..." *"Like their family?"* "Yes aye, and er you still, people still speak to one another but er it's not sorta all, born and bred, I suppose that's what I mean."

Jill suggests that 'incomers' are to some extent outsiders, not known or not part of what makes up a 'fishing community'. Sarah expressed a similar sentiment when I asked her what changes she had seen round Buckie:

"When I hear, like [my husband's] granny talking about what it was like long ago, it's changed vastly, but then I suppose it's the same for every community. I suppose there was much more of a sense of everybody pulling together sort of thing. Whereas now, I mean my family [...] were brought up in much smaller fishing villages where everybody knew each other and things, my mum and dad moved to Buckie after they got married and it's a bigger place. And you're losing that closeness where everybody knows everybody. A lot of villages along the coast, a lot of people have moved in, and you lose that thing of everybody knows everybody and their grannies and great grannies and that, and I suppose if you go back far enough they're related in some way. I think probably with TV and that, it's brought in different cultures from all over Britain into peoples homes, I suppose culturally you're losing a lot of your own culture, it's all sort of merged. And you're losing some of your identity of the community. It's even things like the language spoken changing."

Sarah uses a romantic discourse of community, of how people used to "pull together", to describe the places where her family lived. Now, she suggests, with people moving in from other areas, people are no longer tied into historical social relationships and with a wider range of cultural influences these 'fishing communities' are losing their distinctive identity. This distinctiveness is based on the physical presence of fishing through boats and the social and economic relations described above, but also on language and accent.

The perceived influx of 'incomers' not only alters the social characteristics of a place, but can also push existing members of the 'community' out. In an

interview with Jack we were talking about the effect of people retiring to the area or buying second homes:

“But people are moving here for different reasons; I would say 20 to 30 year ago people moved here for work, now people are moving here for leisure. [...] But er, aye it is unfair, with the likes of some in the community, like they’ve made the community what it is. And then you’ve got basically the crime rates, nothing like the scale of Newcastle, I suppose every little place has got some kind of drug problem, but nothing really. So it’s basically a nice community to stay in, and then you’ve got people what made the community what it is. And as you’re seeing the house prices go up, and you find a lot of people who lived in the community their whole life cannae afford to stay in the community anymore and they’re on to rented accommodation, which is kind of sad. [...] It’s young folk trying to get on the ladder, that’s really difficult. Really here in the last two or three years it went crazy, like you could have bought a high street, a house on the high street er the house was probably built at the turn of the century by craftsmen, masons ken, you could of bought that for 80, 90, 100 thousand, now there’s bought council houses going for 90,000, it’s quite a turnaround in two year, you could do with a crystal ball thing! [...] Cullen, I think there’s the most what would you call them... well I’d call them white settlers ken! [laughing!] The biggest percentage of settlers is Cullen.”

Jack uses the term “white settlers”, drawing on a wider Scottish nationalist discourse on the movement of English people into Scotland. The English are the largest group of ‘incomers’ to this stretch of coast and their presence is not always seen as positive. Jack, as do others, sees ‘incomers’ as driving up house prices at the expense of those who come from the area. Those who are part of the ‘community’, through their place of birth and family, and who “made the community what it is” are unable to stay.

It is in and around Lossiemouth in particular that fishing has been displaced from the centre of social and economic activities. Here one of the major employers is now the RAF, which has two bases on the outskirts of the town. The presence of the RAF in Lossiemouth is seen in contradictory terms. On the one hand it has brought much needed employment and money into the economy of the area, however it is also taking the central role that fishing once occupied and bringing in more 'incomers'. Jack went onto talk about the social scene in Lossiemouth:

"If you go up to Lossie, like I've got fishing friends up in Lossie, and I sometimes go up to see them for a drink, and it's like the first pub you go into and it's all like the Scottish people, and then the next pub you go into there's nae a Scottish voice! Aye there's a lot, I think they are going to reduce it in size though, which wouldnae be a good thing for Lossie, because all the RAF people, I think they are quite nice people, they're all quite sporty down at the golf club, there's quite a lot of money in the town, ken?"

As does Sarah above, Jack refers to the oral aspect of identity, the accent, which marks people as belonging to the 'fishing community', and how increasingly other voices are heard.

Stuart has lived in Lossiemouth all his life, and was a fisherman up until 2002 when he decommissioned his boat. When I asked him if he felt there was a 'fishing community' left in Lossiemouth he explained how the RAF has 'taken over' from fishing:

"I suppose there is aye, there's still your older fishermen, and there's still your bunker down at the harbour, and there's all your old lads in and out of there. [...] It's funny really, there's still a bit, kinda fishing community, there's still everybody that was at the fishing knows everybody else, and there's always that bit of... thing, but the thing is the size compared to what's in Lossie now is next to nothing. Because it's shrunk so much and there's

probably so many new people has come into Lossie, the RAF and all the rest of it. [...] In the likes of maybe Hopeman or Burghead, the smaller places, there's probably more a sense of fishing community there than there is here, because there's just so many RAF and stuff like that. I'd say [the RAF] have more community and get up and go. I mean the fishing boats used to be good, because they'd donate money to this, that and the other, the local association and everything. But because everything has just shrunk, they can nae do it now. Whereas now it's just the RAF, they've got their finger in all the pies, which isn't bad, I mean fishermen probably would nae want to go on committees and things. I mean if you were to ask a fisherman could you give us a hand, they'd say 'no but I'll give you a donation'. Whether it was to do with the fact that you were at sea and come home you did nae want to be bothered with anything else, and if somebody was trying to get you, the easiest way was to give them a donation, give them a bottle for a bottle stall or give them £50. There is a fishing community right enough, but it's just shrunk so much and there's so many other things going round about in Lossie, fishing is next to non-existent I would say. There's a guy lives next door, he's a pilot on the Tornados, and I was chatting to him and he could nae believe I'd lived in Lossie all my life, ken what I mean?"

Stuart suggests that fishing has become less visible in Lossiemouth, and that fishermen are no longer central figures in local society. He also suggests that those who have moved in with the RAF have different life experiences or values and the important attachments to place within fishing identities is not part of their value systems.

The sense that fishing has become invisible within Lossiemouth was echoed by James, a retired skipper who has lived and worked from there all his life:

"It's so changed it's unbelievable, as I say, every road led to the harbour, everybody's work was involved, everybody knew the

seasons, the fisheries, the benefits and the tragedies and to live through that as well at a price. Just a remnant left now, a few boats and a few men, but it's not apparent, it's not in front of your eyes in the community and port and harbour. Just a remnant left."

A traditional 'fishing community' is constructed as a place where everyone is known and is part of historical social networks. However, the places along this coast have experienced an influx of people from outside, 'incomers', who are not part of these social maps and are not known. These 'fishing communities' are losing their distinctiveness, through the presence of non-local accents and dialects and the influence of other cultures. 'Incomers' are seen as diluting the strength of fishing in these places, by pushing local people out through house prices, or replacing fishermen at the centre of local society. The 'fishing community' has become invisible within the wider 'community'.

8.8 Discussion

The notion of a 'fishing community' is a boundary expressing symbol that is performed through the shared memories and histories of the participants in this research. The actual places which these ideas of 'fishing communities' refer to are sites of performance of individual and collective identities. According to the participants in this research, at the heart of a 'fishing community' is the harbour with its fleet of fishing boats and the ancillary services they support. The size of the fleet and the prosperity of the service industries demonstrate the success of the fishermen individually and as a group, particularly through the building of new boats. The harbour and its businesses perform important social functions as the site of socialisation and learning local skills for the next generation of fishers. Up in the commercial areas of these 'fishing communities' the economy is driven by the success of the fishing industry, and 'good fishermen' recognise their role in the local economy by supporting local businesses and shops. The 'fishing communities' are prosperous, and 'good fishermen' demonstrate their

success and hard work by consuming goods, a sign of success that can be read by others. Social networks and events are central to 'fishing communities' and fishermen are at the heart of these networks. Occasions such as the weekly landings or Christmas are celebratory events, where the prosperity of the fleet and the success of individual fishermen is assessed and displayed. Within a 'fishing community' everyone is known and can be placed on a map of local social relationships that can go back generations, placing people in the history of these 'communities'. There is a definite sense of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in these 'fishing communities', marked by a person's history, accent, or knowledge of the 'community' and the local industry.

However, these 'fishing communities' were spoken about in past tense, and are part of a collective memory for the people who participated in this research. The knowledge of and competence to talk about these 'fishing communities' is in itself a sign of belonging.

Major changes in the fishing industry and broader society have altered the components of 'fishing communities' as constructed by the fishermen and wives I spoke with. The numbers of boats and fishermen in these places have declined, and so the services they supported round the harbour have struggled to survive or have diversified. Some harbours have become reliant on other industries, such as Lossiemouth with leisure and tourism, or Buckie with the lifeboats and shipping cargo. These areas may still look prosperous to outsiders, but for those within the 'fishing community' this is an inappropriate use of fishing spaces. With fishermen unable to perform their spending and consumption, shops and businesses in the town have also suffered. Fraserburgh in particular has become "a ghost town", with boarded up shops and a drug problem. The fishing industry that was once the "backbone" of these places is no longer able to support it. In other places such as Lossiemouth and Buckie, other industries are now supporting the local economy. The social make-up of these places has changed with a perceived influx of 'incomers' who are not part of the social map of the 'fishing communities'. With the loss of the fishing-based events, social occasions are now dominated by other groups and interests, with the fishermen feeling

excluded or at the margins. The 'fishing community' has gone from being the centre of these places, to a marginalised 'community' within the wider society.

9 Conclusions

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This thesis has explored the construction and performance of fishing identities in the context of industry restructuring. In this chapter I provide an overview of the research, draw together key concluding points from the empirical work and suggest areas for further research.

Restructuring is an on-going and seemingly perpetual feature of the fishing industry. Concerns over fleet decommissioning, stock levels of key target species and fears over the future of the in-shore fleet continue to dominate debate and discourse within the industry. The demersal sector remains subject to strict limits on quota and days at sea, yet there is still considered to be an overcapacity within the fleet. In the study area for this research, 55% of fishers have left the industry over the last 10 years (Aberdeenshire Council, 2007). The restructuring process is on-going and impacting on many sectors, responding to global problems in fish stocks. Until now, however, little attention has been given to the socio-cultural impacts of this restructuring process. In this thesis I have used the concept of identity to provide insight into the socio-cultural dimensions of fishing, and how they interact with the restructuring of the industry.

In recent years fisheries policy has indeed started to consider the role of social objectives. However, there remains much uncertainty as to how these should be conceptualised, measured and addressed. Previous studies of fishing dependency have tended to conceptualise socio-cultural issues solely in terms of employment. This thesis uses identity as a way of capturing the wider socio-cultural dimensions within the industry. This research has shed

light on the nature of the restructuring of the fishing industry and the consequences for fishers, households and communities, through providing one of the first in-depth empirical studies of the lived worlds of Scottish fishermen and their wives.

In undertaking this research I have demonstrated how these socio-cultural dimensions can be conceptualised and explored using the concept of identity. During fieldwork I encountered many methodological challenges. Due to the nature of the work of fishing it can be especially difficult to access fishermen and their families. Fishermen's work patterns are unpredictable and time spent as a family at the end of a fishing trip is precious. This meant it took much time and effort to arrange interviews and at all times I had to be sensitive to the context in which I was working. Negotiating access was made more difficult by the current climate of restructuring, which is creating fear and uncertainty within the industry and suspicion of 'outsiders' asking questions. By using sensitive qualitative methods, building a network of personal connections and through persistence and physical presence in the area under study, I found that although gaining access can be challenging, it is not impossible.

It has proved useful to conceptualise fishing identities within three domains: sea, household and community.

9.1 The sea

The sea is where fishermen construct and perform their identity through work. Here the identities of fishers are constructed around three key areas, each of which is being unsettled in its own way by industry restructuring. First, there is the nature of the work itself. This is intensely physical and undertaken under challenging conditions. Participants in this research talked repeatedly about the need for stoicism to enable them to do the job of fishing. The nature of the work also requires high levels of skill in many areas. These include skills in the techniques of fishing, from what fishermen consider as

basic activities such as preparing nets, to the use of technologically complex fish-finding radar. Fishermen need to be able to read the weather. Business skills are also required, such as understanding the markets to predict prices for a catch, and being able to operate within a highly regulated industry. These skills and forms of knowledge are learnt through both formal training and through lived experience where local knowledge is inherited from others. Whilst fishermen perceive that they are externally identified as 'all brawn and no brains', within the community the skill, honesty and self-reliance of fishermen is recognised and highly prized.

Second, there are a range of issues around building a crew. Crews are based on teamwork and individuals performing their assigned tasks to ensure the smooth operation of the boat. The skipper has ultimate responsibility for the success of the boat and thus for the livelihoods of the crew. However the skipper needs a good crew to be able to do this and so there is a reciprocal relationship between them. Skippers are responsible for crew who are often their neighbours or family members; the success of the boat therefore has direct and visible repercussions on shore. The relationship between skippers is complex and involves carefully considered sharing of information.

The third point concerns flexibility. Fishermen have a range of adaptive strategies as part of their skill set which enables them to deal with the uncertainty of their work. So, for example, if fishing is unsuccessful in one area a skipper might draw on knowledge of past seasons and move to an area which had previously been successful. For fishermen flexibility is also about being able to make decisions on the spot and act on them.

The domain of the sea is where fishermen and fishing identities interact most directly with policy. Policy changes are seen to have progressively undermined the autonomy and flexibility of skippers. No longer is a skipper able to move around the sea at will, but must operate within permit systems and closed areas imposed by policy. Skippers are increasingly unable to use the knowledge and adaptive strategies that they have traditionally considered as integral to being a good skipper. Fishers point to an increasing volume of

regulation as being responsible for substantially reducing the amount of time a skipper can devote to fishing. Regulation and administration were never part of the traditional construction of fishermen's identities. Participants in this research often felt that they were being cast as criminals. This external identification by onlookers, including non-fishing society, the management system and the media, is rejected by fishermen. Drawing on the discourse of the hard-working honest fisherman, they construct their misdemeanours as breaking the rules to get by through need not greed, and also on the basis of a construction of the regulatory system as flawed. The regulatory system was frequently identified by fishermen as created by politicians and officials who cannot 'know' the fishing industry as fishermen do; because they do not live the job, they do not have the requisite knowledge on which to make decisions on fishing practices. This knowledge is only achieved, for these fishermen, by having fishing 'in the blood'.

Skippers have found it increasingly difficult to maintain a steady crew which has led to a destabilising of traditional work relations and routines. There is a perceived exodus from the industry because of the uncertainty caused by restructuring. The fishing industry is no longer seen as a positive career choice for young men, and there is a prevailing sense of a lack of 'new blood' in the industry. There is also an increasing reliance on what is seen as 'foreign' labour because local men can pursue more regular and better-paid employment in the off-shore oil and gas industry. This research has shown how the exit of fishermen from the industry, or new entrants from elsewhere, compounds the increasingly negative image associated with being a fisherman.

Several of the fishermen who participated in this research had left the industry because they felt they were unable to survive within the regulatory system or sought better opportunities in other industries. Leaving the industry meant not only that they could not perform practical aspects of being a fisherman. It also meant they felt excluded from the social networks of fishing work. However, many also maintained that identity was not just about being able to perform

the work of fishing, but about being part of a fishing community. Fishing would always be with them, they felt, because it was 'in the blood'.

9.2 The household

The second domain of fishing is the household. This is the private world of fishing, where the household works to enable the fisherman to go to sea. At the centre of a 'good' fishing household is a capable fisherman's wife. Fishermen's wives must be independent and multi-skilled in the running the household. They learn this skill though being raised in fishing households themselves. Women are critical in the reproduction and socialising of fishing identities within households. Successful fishermen's wives are able to manage the household through the specifics of the industry, through living with an uncertain income, through not knowing when the husband would be home, and having to bring up children on their own. However, this research highlights that there is a constant renegotiation of this independence, and fishermen's wives must be prepared to relinquish control on the return of their husbands from the sea.

Fishermen's wives have to deal on a daily basis with anxiety about the welfare of their husbands and sons whilst they are at sea, whilst not allowing this level of worry to become disabling. This emotional management is learnt from their mothers, through growing up in a fishing household. Fishermen and their wives often recognise that some aspects of fishing households could be seen as quite negative, such as children being largely brought up with an absent father. However, this is constructed as part and parcel of being a fishing household and "all they had ever known". Fishermen's wives have also had to adapt their household management and routines to changes in the industry, such as the shift from weekly sailing to more intensive and irregular tripping.

Restructuring of the industry has brought about many repercussions for the household. One key area relates to stress and worry. Women have a large stake in the future of the industry and are themselves concerned about the

restructuring processes. Alongside their own concern, their workload as carers has increased as a result of having to support stressed husbands. A second critical impact of restructuring relates to the renegotiation of household roles when a fisherman leaves the industry. In these circumstances the temporary renegotiations which go on at the end of every trip become permanent and more challenging for both fishermen and their wives. Women can no longer perform their independence and skills of running the household single-handedly. Fishermen and their wives have to learn how to share the responsibility of running a household and bringing up children. However it can also provide new-found freedom from responsibility for some fishermen's wives.

9.3 The community

The third domain of fishing is the community, which can be considered as the public world of fishing. In this research the idea of a 'fishing community' has been conceptualised in two ways. Firstly it is brought into being through the performance of individual and collective fishing identities within a place. Secondly the claim to belonging to a fishing community is an important symbol in the construction of fishing identities. The notion of fishing communities was frequently used by participants in this research who brought them to life through the stories they told of them. Their construction of fishing communities was based on shared ideas of what makes a 'fishing community'. Three themes emerged in their discourse.

Firstly a 'fishing community', as constructed by the people in this research, has an active harbour that is dominated by the fishing industry. The harbour has boats physically present and is a busy site of activity and work based on the industry. There is a thriving group of ancillary businesses crowded around the harbour providing services to the fleet, such as the fish market, net makers and ice factories. The building of new boats symbolises the future of the industry and the 'fishing community'. Fishermen recognise their role in supporting these businesses, the way in which the businesses function as

sites for learning and apprenticeship for young men, and that they are a repository of skills such as net making and boat building that are vital to the future of the industry.

Secondly, the economy of the whole town is considered to be driven by the fishing industry. The personal spending of fishermen and their wives can be understood as part of the performance of fishing identities. Spending and conspicuous consumption of material goods were constructed as well earned rewards for hard work and success at fishing. And fishermen recognised their role in supporting the success of the local economy by ensuring that they bought their goods locally. For many the level of economic prosperity acted as a barometer of individual and collective success.

Thirdly the presence of fishing at the centre of social structures and occasions was important in participants' constructions of fishing communities. A 'fishing community' has fishermen as the main occupational group and at the centre of social activities. Ritual events such as Christmas parties or the sailing of the fleet on a Sunday demonstrated the presence of fishermen in the community and provided the opportunity for collective performances of fishing identities. These events were also celebratory, marking the success of individual fishermen and the local fleet. According to participants in this research everyone is known in a 'fishing community' and can be placed within the social and historical maps of that place. A 'fishing community' is seen as having a sense of community and collective spirit, with fishermen playing their part in its social structures.

However, 'fishing communities' were often referred to by participants in the past tense, or in attempting to assess whether the places that they lived in could still be classed as 'fishing communities'. Most perceived these places as having undergone changes which challenged this status as 'fishing communities' in each of the three areas outlined above. Several of the harbours had experienced declining levels of use by the industry and had converted to alternative uses, which for some was seen as 'inappropriate' for fishing harbours. For many participants, the loss of fishing boats physically

present in the harbour fundamentally challenged the status of 'fishing community'. As fishing activity and ancillary services around the harbour decline the role in socialising the next generation into the industry is being lost, with the erosion of skills seen as further threatening the future of the place as a 'fishing community'.

The difficulties faced by fishermen in continuing to make a living in the industry is seen as reflected in the declining prosperity of the local economy. Individuals are unable to perform the spending that was part of their fishing identity, and this has a knock-on effect on the local economy. The industry and the fishermen within it see themselves as no longer able to support the local economy. People spoke of places becoming "ghost towns" dominated by charity shops, which was constructed as a reflection of the decline of the fishing industry. Other industries, such as the off-shore oil and gas, and in Lossiemouth the RAF, have become the mainstay of the local economy.

Finally, the social structures and events within these places are no longer dominated by the fishing industry. Occasions that celebrated the success of individuals and the fleet are no longer held, or are no longer based around fishing. There was a general perception that as people within the industry struggle to get by, there is no extra money or effort to be spent on these events. The social structures of these places are considered as having been diluted by an influx of 'incomers' who are not part of the history of the place as a 'fishing community' and cannot be placed within its social structures.

The performances of fishing identities based on the symbols outlined above have been challenged by the restructuring of the fishing industry. Without these performances, the places along this stretch of coast are no longer seen as 'fishing communities' in the way that they once were. This reinforces the loss of fishing identity as people can no longer lay claim of belonging to a 'fishing community' which had previously been an important symbol of fishing identity.

9.4 Reflections on fishing identities

The fishing identities presented in this research and summarised in the sections above are remarkably coherent. The participants in this research spoke about their work and lives in extremely similar ways – in both the language that they used and the ideas they expressed. Fishermen were constructed as hard-working, stoical men who work in close-knit teams and are able to face the challenges of fishing using their wide range of skills. Fishing households were portrayed as revolving around strong, independent women who are capable of running the household and family whilst their husband is at sea and provide the support which enables the men to fish. And fishing communities were described as having the fishing industry at their physical, economic and social core. Why were the constructions of fishing identity so similar? Does this mean that I only saw the external, public face of fishing identities, the collective ideal-type presented to outsiders, rather than how individuals used fishing to construct their own identities? Or is it that individual fishing identities are part of a strong, coherent and shared understanding of the industry?

Methodological issues could underpin this sameness of the fishing identities captured here. Using gatekeepers and a snowballing approach to sampling meant that I relied on others from within the industry for access to potential participants. Therefore key individuals had a certain level of control over who I was introduced to and so the way the fishing industry and identities were presented to me. However I was aware of this potential influence throughout, and worked to ensure I gained access to a range of fishing households from different age groups, locations, both active and former fishermen, and from across the complex political landscape of the industry.

The way in which I generated materials for this research will also have influenced the identities captured here. Interviews are a false and unnatural setting and do not represent 'real life'. They are a performance between the participants and interviewer, and so perhaps the identities portrayed were a self-conscious performance of the public face of fishing. Participants may

have been telling me either what they thought I wanted to hear, or a controlled version of what they wanted me to hear. However, my approach to interviewing, being flexible, in-depth and unstructured, was designed to create as much of an ordinary conversation as possible. I also went back to participants for a second interview where practical. The interviews were not explicitly about identity; instead I focussed on people's biographies, memories and the routines of their everyday lives. This enabled me to move beyond the public face of fishing to explore the impact of the industry and its restructuring on both their day-to-day work and longer-term understanding of their lives.

I believe that although these methodological issues may have contributed to the similarities between what the participants told me, fishing identities are part of a strong, coherent discourse that is shared by those who live alongside and work within the industry. This is due to three characteristics of being involved in the fishing industry. Firstly, being part of the fishing industry is a lived experience that impacts upon all aspects of daily life. Peter and Kate's story at the beginning of Chapter 6 highlights the way in which the work of fishing is all-consuming. For skippers and crew, time spent at sea revolves around the pattern of casting the nets, hauling in, casting the nets again and sorting the catch. Jill and Roy's story in the following chapter illustrates the way fishermen's time at home is also often focussed on fishing and the trip ahead. Chapter 7 also demonstrates the impact of fishing on the wider household, from day-to-day impacts such as women working to arrange their appointments around the pattern of their husband's trip to longer term implications for the way they raise their children. The intensity of living alongside and working within the fishing industry means that it impacts on all aspects of life, and so it is perhaps unsurprising that it is such a strong influence on constructions of identity.

Secondly, being part of the fishing industry is a learnt, almost inherited experience. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the majority of men and women who took part in this research had grown up in fishing households. Fishermen often began to learn their practical and cultural skills through fishing with their father or other family members, and continue to learn from other fishermen

throughout their careers. Women in particular emphasised the importance of learning how to run a fishing household through their own upbringing in a fishing household. The industry is part of people's lives from a very early age, and a central part of family histories and heritage.

Thirdly, being part of the fishing industry is a shared experience, whether this is between fishermen within their close-knit crews, within families, or between families and crew within the wider social networks of fishing communities. The lived, learnt and shared nature of being part of the fishing industry provides a strong and coherent discourse from which individual and collective identities are constructed.

Having this strong sense of identity and holding it in common with others provides an important sense of belonging and a way to make sense of the world and changing circumstances. Shared identities and ideas of community are used particularly in times of change and perceived threats to that which makes an identity distinctive (Dalby and Mackenzie, 1997; Cohen, 1985). This research was carried out during a time of 'crisis' and great change within the fishing industry. It may be that the fishing identities would not come across so strongly in more settled times.

However I do not mean to imply that the identities presented here are a static snapshot of 'times gone by'. Fishing identities have not been fixed over time but have adapted as the industry on which they are based and the wider society they are part of have changed. For example, as technologies have changed fishermen have adopted skills in using new technologies such as radar as part of their fishing identity. Women's identities have undergone the greatest change. Previous generations of fishermen's wives had a much greater hands-on involvement in the family fishing enterprises, which has now shifted to more remote business support, alongside the social and emotional roles that have always been part of women's fishing identities.

It is also not the case that everyone always adhered to this shared understanding of fishing. Within this coherent identity there were also

instances where individuals diverged from the dominant discourse expressed by others. For example, as discussed in Chapter 6 The Sea, the problems in fish stocks were often constructed as being the fault of the management system which was seen as being politically motivated and scientifically flawed. This enabled fishermen to be the battling underdogs operating within an unfair and unjust system. However, one particular former fisherman highlighted the role fishermen have played in depleting stocks through their “blinkered” approach focussing solely on their need to make a living at the expense of the wider environment in which they operate. Subtle differences in people’s understanding of their work and lives came across within this research, reflecting the influence of individual circumstances. In this case the difference can perhaps be attributed to the distance and reflection afforded to this individual by no longer being an active fisherman.

So what does this coherent fishing identity mean for those who share it? As stated above it provides an important sense of belonging that embeds individuals within ‘fishing communities’. However the implication of this suggests that challenges to fishing identities, such as those induced by the restructuring of the industry, will be destabilising for individuals, households and the wider community. Participants in this research expressed a real fear for and uncertainty over the future of fishing along this stretch of coast, and what would happen should the industry collapse. This was often compared to the closure of coal mines and the devastating impacts this had on the towns that depended upon them. This shared identity has also provided the basis for collective action. Whilst there has not been room to discuss it here, women in particular have come together in defence of the industry and their communities. This collective identity could also provide a valuable resource for community development approaches to developing a sustainable future for the places along this coast (Ray, 2001; Shortall and Shucksmith, 2001).

9.5 Future research

The concept of identity has provided a useful tool for exploring the socio-cultural dimensions of the fishing industry. However there have of course been areas that it has not been possible to fully explore in the research and which could benefit from further attention. For example, my research has focussed predominantly on skippers and their wives. This has, in part, been due to the methods used to select participants which highlights who people within the industry see as appropriate spokespersons for the industry. It has therefore not been possible to explore whether there are differences between the constructions of identity by skippers and crew, or indeed children within fishing households. It would also be valuable to explore the perceptions of fishing identities from the perspective of the wider community including those resident in 'fishing communities' but not working within the industry, policy makers and those working within fisheries control and enforcement.

A final challenge, and area for further research, concerns whether and how fisheries policy might more explicitly take on board the socio-cultural dimensions that have formed the focus of this research. What would this mean for decision-making and the development of specific policies? How should socio-cultural considerations be balanced with environmental or economic concerns? And how fishing communities might be approached within broader rural and regional development policies? This research has made an important contribution to the first step in this debate, identifying and exploring the socio-cultural dimensions of fishing and charting their changing character in the face of industry restructuring. Further work is needed to take this in-depth information forward and begin to apply it within policy development and delivery.

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